

PREACHING AND LEADERSHIP FOR CHURCH
GROWTH IN A CHANGING
COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT
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by

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The objective of this research was to prove that biblical instruction would motivate a rural church to embrace change in a new suburban environment. This ministry model was conducted at Canaan Baptist Church in Suffolk Virginia. Pre- and post-test analysis was conducted to measure attitudinal change and sermons and seminars served as treatment. The results confirm the hypothesis that biblical instruction would assist in motivating change at Canaan Baptist Church.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you, Lord, for all you've done for me. Without you, Lord, where would I be in life? I want to give credit to so many people who have been a blessing in my life. I want to first start off by thanking my late mother, Clara Barnes, for never giving up on me. So many times she sacrificed her last for me. Thank you for staying by my side even in spirit.

To my daughter, Altovise, for all her help in completing this project, I can't thank you enough. To my wife, thank you for supporting me through my studies. A very special thanks to Laverne Budd for all the hard work and tireless effort you have brought forth throughout this entire project, without your help I don't know how I would have made it through.

To Deacon Ronald Thomas and the entire Canaan Baptist Church congregation, thank you for continuing to stand behind me as your pastor as I tried to reach a higher level of education. Your prayers got me through.

Special thanks to Dr. Melvin Marriner, Dr. Hoffman Brown and Dr. Daryl Hairston for their friendship and their wisdom; I appreciate all your help and advice during my studies. Last but not least, I want to say thank you to my mentors, Dr. Ricky Woods and Dr. Terry Thomas for all the help and unconditional support you have shown me throughout my studies.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my best friend

my mother

The Late Clara O. Barnes

and to

my brother and sister

The Late

Claude N. Barnes

and

Sheila O. Parker

INTRODUCTION

As pastor of Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia my mission is to provide effective leadership. It is my hope that my ministry will provide sound biblical, historical and theological relevance. Relevance in this context implies that the information given will be applicable. In layman's terms my mission is to provide gospel that you can use. Traditionally the church has sought to change the community, as evident many years ago when the church sought to educate the community and established church schools. However in the context of my ministry, the community is forcing the church to change. The community is quickly becoming a suburb. Canaan Baptist Church is located in Suffolk, Virginia. Suffolk has been considered rural area as it still has the vestiges of rural life, wherein its homes are farther apart from one another. Yet with the influx of developers, Suffolk now has planned communities and housing developments. The dynamics of an impending suburb fosters new problems for the church. I've always believed that the church today is a mere microcosm of society at large. Whatever affects the community will eventually impact the church. The congregation that I presently serve finds itself in an evolving community. The church is nestled amidst middle-income folks. New homes valued at \$150,000 are being built around the church. The community has shopping areas, movie theaters, restaurants and schools. The area is emerging into a vibrant city. However, imagine the implications of maintaining a rural mindset in an emerging city? Over the past fifteen years, Canaan Baptist Church has lost its community involvement. This is due in part because the congregants continue to embrace rural

traditions, as they are operating in a frame of reference that no longer exists. Substance abuse has become rampant throughout the community creating a multiplicity of concerns such as: addiction, increase in crime, disproportionate number of young men and women incarcerated, grandparents assuming the role of primary care providers, and increased incidents of HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis. The church can see the vestiges of substance abuse yet the church has not become active in prevention and treatment of substance abuse. Why are we not holding Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings here? The church needs to become more involved in enhancing the quality of life for the elderly. This could be accomplished by establishing a senior citizen center.

The book of Nehemiah reveals a story of persons originally unmotivated for change. Underlying my duties to provide leadership is the inherent challenge to motivate people to do something about the obvious. How does one go about that? Thom S. Rainer stated, "Contemporary church growth plans can do more harm than good." He explained that the key to lasting growth is best accomplished in tiny steps. It is his belief, and I concur, that tiny steps facilitate sensitive change, which occur at a comfortable pace. In attempting my purpose, Rainer reminds me that the process of leading a traditional church is analogous to "eating an elephant." It is a long term and deliberate process that must be implemented "one bite at a time." The writer warned against two extreme pitfalls when attempting a large task. One, do not become intimidated by the size of the task and ignore the task. Two, don't approach the task too quickly without time for proper planning and attainment of required resources.¹ Effective growth occurs one step at a time, the Apostle Paul discussed this notion of seed planting in I Cor. 3:6. Paul demonstrated the dynamics

¹ Thom S. Rainer, *Eating the Elephant, Bite-sized Steps to Achieve Long-Term Growth in Your Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1994), 223.

of effective leadership. I would like, not to be Paul however, but to establish and deliver those characteristics that set him apart as a dynamic spiritual leader. “Paul mastered the art of turning a debilitating weakness into a glorious triumph.”² It is my hope that this work will provide the reader with a clear understanding of the essential elements required for “Preaching for church growth in a changing community.”

Chapter One, Ministry Focus, will explain why the writer chose this area of ministry. It will provide insight inside into the nature of the man (the writer) by detailing his journey through life, his call to the ministry, and culminate with his role as pastor of Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk Virginia. It will describe the demographic composition of Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia. It will provide a historical account of Canaan Baptist, Suffolk, Virginia from past to present.

Chapter Two, The State of The Art in this Ministry Model, will demonstrate the writer’s grasp of the concept of what is required to motivate a rural church for change. In this chapter, the writer will reveal relevant concepts of rural ministry. This section will utilize full citation in footnotes.

Chapter Three, Theoretical Foundation, will discuss the core of this work. The key components of this chapter will be the historical, biblical and theological foundation. The historical foundation will discuss the significance of the church. It will document the role of the African American Church in shaping the lives of its members. It will discuss the implications and characteristics of being a rural church. The biblical foundation will provide Old Testament and New Testament text, which served as an inspiration for this work, for it is consistent with sound biblical doctrine that prayer changes things. The

² J. Oswald Sanders, *Dynamic Spiritual Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1999), 180.

theological foundation will provide the catalyst for change. It will reveal how the writer's understanding of God's law will serve as a catalyst for change. It is the intent of this writer to utilize this section to address the issue of complacency within the body of believers.

Chapter Four, Methodology, will discuss the methods used in the field experience. This section will include pre and post test surveys utilized for this work. It will explain the writer's intent in choosing these instruments of measure. It will reveal how the surveys were disseminated and to whom. It will detail sermons utilized to motivate the congregation for change.

Chapter Five, Field Experience, will describe what happened during the actual research project. It will discuss data collection methods. It will discuss statistical analysis of the data. It will reveal the significance (results) of its finding to the core mission "preaching for rural church growth in a changing community."

Chapter Six will include the writer's reflection on the research. The writer will describe any epiphanies originating from this work. The writer will state what, if any, inferences can be made from this work. The writer should acknowledge other alternatives that could have been utilized in implementing this work. The writer will summarize the model and field experience.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

My journey began in the fall of 1953, in rural Norfolk County, which is now Chesapeake, Virginia. I am Robert L. Barnes, II, second of three children born to Clara and Robert Barnes, Sr. I am the only surviving child from this union. I learned of Christianity through my grandmother. My grandmother was a small yet powerful woman, approximately 4 feet 11 inches tall, with a complexion as smooth as chocolate. Her hands symbolized **work** (they curved inward as if she was holding something.) She was thorough in her household duties. Although she didn't attend church every Sunday, she had a keen sense of the bible, and a profound love for the Lord. She required everyone living under her roof to attend church regularly and participate in church activities. My grandmother held bible study in our home every Monday evening. We were required to read a verse from the bible and expound upon its meaning. Grandmother did not always facilitate Monday night bible study, but she was always there as a listening critic. Grandmother prophesied that I would become a preacher someday. She encouraged me to be expressive and to look beyond the obvious for the deepest meaning of the scriptures.

My journey began with my grandmother because she was the one love of my life and I was the apple of her eye. I lived to please her. Through my grandmother, I learned the true essence of love . . . unconditional love. My father abandoned the family when I was five years old, my sister was six, and my brother was four. My mother and her three

children came to live with “grandma” and grandpa. My grandfather died when I was still a little boy, so my aunt and uncle came to live with us. Recently much attention has been given to the phrase “It takes a village to raise a child.” This village has been in existence in the black community since creation. My grandmother assumed financial and mentoring responsibility for me, while my aunt assumed the same role for my sister and my mother assumed the role for my brother. We live and worked harmoniously together. However, it was apparent that grandmother was the head of household. Through grandmother, I learned obedience, patience, sacrifice, and love. Somehow grandmother taught me that sacrifice is a promissory note for the future, “no cross no crown.”

I completed high school and went to college. Now that I was at Saint Paul’s College, life was pretty good. In July 1974, the robber came. My grandmother was snatched up as recorded in I Corinthians 15:52-53. I was disappointed with “God.” How could he take my grandmother away from me? She was the love of my life. I really never knew a greater love. I was totally consumed by her passing. I became angry and rebellious so I decided to drop out of school. It was not until my grandmother’s passing that I realized my mother loved and respected me. I cannot recall the time between July 1974 and July 1975. 1975 was my running time; I was here and there but nowhere really. I finally rediscovered my self and I met and married my new love Cynthia. I was called to the ministry and licensed to preach the gospel in June 1976. I accepted the call to the ministry out of a sense of obligation to God and grandmother. I had no expectations from this “calling.” I felt as though I’ll do this, hurry up and get this out of the way, perhaps secretly hoping to fail. I learned that no expectation is a recipe for failure and a lack of fulfillment in Jesus Christ. I was licensed to preach at my home church, Divine Baptist Church by Rev. John R. Briggs. Shortly after being called into the ministry, my son

Sheldon was born in September 1977. Two years and three months later, my daughter Altovise was born in December 1979.

I record 1976-84 as my first spiritual wilderness experience. During this time I graduated from undergraduate school, accepted many platform engagements, served as guest preacher at numerous churches and worked actively in the Baptist Association. It was during this time that I recognized death as being a necessary transition before glory. Hugh Prather eloquently wrote “. . . we must accept the justice of death and injustice of life.” I was ordained as a ministry in 1984. It was apparent to me that once I “let go and let God,” my life would be enriched. I was blessed with my first church in 1985, the same year I enrolled in Richmond Theological Seminary. My first church, Little Zion Baptist Church, is located in rural Suffolk, Virginia. I had an old church, old congregation, yet I learned to trust God for he is the supplier of needs. My first term as pastor with Little Zion was four years. I was then called to North Gayton Baptist Church, Richmond Virginia. North Gayton was a rural church when I got there, however it quickly became a suburban church. My greatest challenge was to stay ahead of the growth. My preaching style of preaching went from being a fisher among men to becoming CEO.

Disappointingly, I became more of a manager than a preacher. I served four year with North Gayton. I returned back to Little Zion for my second time. I served one year until I was called to serve as pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Aylett, Virginia. Providence was a rural church. My preaching style was much like that at Little Zion, “a member of a fishing crew.” I served at Providence for four years. Currently, I pastor Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia. The membership is approximately 350 members.

Throughout my service as pastor, I strive for enhancement. It is my desire that the church and congregation will be a little bit better because of my association with them.

Throughout my life, I've learned that I'm a much better person and preacher because I let go and let God. Sure, I've had trials and tribulations, we all have, but God is the same today as yesterday. I learned that lesson from my grandmother and my mother. If you trust and believe He will pull you through. I know now that I am a servant, a humble vessel. I was called to preach God's word and I'm going to preach to five people as if it were fifty. I will preach to fifty persons as if it were 500.

What is important to remember about R. L. Barnes, II, is not that he's pastored four churches in the past sixteen years, nor his academic standings among his classmates, nor his neighborhood, just know that because of God's love, **I've been redeemed!**

Statistical Context Of The City

The city of Suffolk is located in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Suffolk is the largest city in Virginia and the nation's eleventh largest. With a population of 61,800, Suffolk encompasses 430 square miles. The region of Suffolk is known for its rich land, woods, lakes, rivers and rolling terrain.

Suffolk's topography is characterized by two broad, flat terraces separated by a line of gently rolling terrain comprise the land area of this sprawling city. One terrace encompasses the northeastern third of the city. It contains elevations of 10 to 30 feet above sea level and is known geologically as the Dismal Swamp Terrace. The southwestern terrace is known as the Wicomico Terrace. Elevations there range from 40 to 100 feet above sea level, averaging 50 feet. 275,2000 acres of land and water make up Suffolk, and drainage is provided by the Nasemond River and Chuckatuck Creek. Suffolk is a popular residence for those who enjoy moderate climate and a distinct change in

seasons. The average temperatures of 39 degrees in January and 78 degrees in July.

Average rainfall in Suffolk is 44.64 inches and snowfall, 7.5 inches.

Suffolk is located in the heart of the Hampton Roads area and is part of the Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Mileage To Major Cities

Norfolk, Virginia	20 miles
Richmond, Virginia	90 miles
Washington, D.C.	200 miles

Demographics

The City of Suffolk merged with the City of Nansemond on January 1, 1974; it grew overnight from a small, country town of two square miles to the state's largest city of 430 square miles, half the size of Rhode Island. The region's population is projected to double in size in the next twenty years.

Borough	Total Population	White Population	Percent White	Black Population	Percent Black	Other Population	Percent Other
Sleepy Hole	9,545	6,938	72.7	2,183	22.9	424	4.4
Nansemond	9,543	3,185	33.4	6,004	62.9	354	3.7
Chuckatuck	8,715	6,136	60.4	2,314	26.6	265	3.0
Suffolk	8,646	4,735	54.8	3,748	43.3	163	1.9
Cypress	9,370	2,965	31.6	6,212	66.3	193	2.1
Whaleville	8,974	3,404	37.9	5,433	60.5	137	1.5
Holy Neck	8,884	6,908	77.6	1,824	20.5	152	1.7

Population

1990	52,141
1997	59,948
2002	67,195

Median Age

1990	33.6
1997	35.7
2002	36.6

Median Household Income

1990	26,125
1997	30,269
2002	32,476

Median Home Value

1990	70,657
1997	83,668
2002	92,657

Economy

Suffolk was the hub of peanut production for years. Many continue to associate Suffolk with peanuts, however, the city today offers much more. Suffolk's economic base is dependent upon industrial parks, movie studio and plenty of land for high-tech companies (i.e. Planters Peanuts, Sara Lee, QVC, Inc, Lipton, Inc., Ciba Specialty Chemicals, Amadas Industries, Inc. and Penn Engineering & Manufacturing Corporation). With the acquisition of a 41-acre site in Bridgeway Commerce Park, Suffolk will soon be home to SYSCO Foodservices Inc, the largest food service marketing and distribution company in North America. The \$38 million facility, scheduled to open next spring, will significantly boost Suffolk's economy and provide jobs for more than 600 people.

Communication

Communications are provided for Suffolk by two major newspapers, which are, *The Virginia Pilot* and *The Suffolk News Herald*. Tidewater Regional Transit (TRT) provides transportation throughout the city. Suffolk provides easy access to the Port of Hampton Roads and Norfolk International Airport. Norfolk-Southern CSX provide rail service, and there are two municipal airports—Suffolk, with a 5,000-foot runway and Hampton Roads, with a 4,000-foot runway. Greyhound/Trailways provides intercity bus service. Nansemond River is navigable to 12 feet with a 100-foot width, and over 135 trucking firms serve the Hampton Roads area with numerous terminal facilities locally situated.

Historical

Suffolk's history can be traced back to 1608 when the English settled there and traded with the Nansemond Indians. Southern gentility and serene lifestyle still characterize modern day Suffolk. Suffolk has a rich historical legacy which includes: Old Nansemond County Courthouse (1837), Cedar Hill Cemetery (1802), Seaboard Airline Passenger Station (1885) and four historic churches—First Baptist, St. Paul's Episcopal, Main Street United Methodist and Suffolk Christian. As far recreational activities, there's over 8,000 acres of lakes within Suffolk's city limits. Suffolk's temperate climate makes it an excellent place to indulge in outdoor activities year round. Suffolk's 430 square mile acreage is filled with woods, lakes, rivers and rolling terrain. There are lots to see and do in Suffolk. There are more twenty-five parks and other sites for recreational activity within Suffolk.

Education

Suffolk is committed to education and training. Their schools provide well-rounded curriculum with twelve elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. Two community colleges serve Suffolk. Paul D. Camp offers occupational, technical and college transfer tracks, with associate degrees in the arts and sciences and certificate in law enforcement and data processing. Tidewater Community College offers associate degrees in 80 programs and on-site customized training programs. Within the Hampton Roads area, there are eleven degree-awarding colleges, which include Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University and Virginia Wesleyan College.

Churches

Suffolk legacy is rich with places of worship. Suffolk is home to 115 churches of various denominations, which brings me to Canaan Baptist Church, where I am privileged to pastor. Canaan Baptist Church is located at 2064 Nansemond Parkway, Suffolk, Virginia. Canaan Baptist Church lies within the borders of Sleepy Hole and Nansemond borough. Canaan's history dates back to 1875 with a starting membership of approximately twelve persons. The church was set up in Wilroy, Virginia, which at that time was called Wiggin's Grove. The first building used for worship belonged to Mr. Dempsey Wiggins, who graciously allowed his building to be used for church services. In its 126-year existence, Canaan Baptist church has had eight pastors, of which I am the eighth. Rev. J. W. Summer was the first pastor and served for 12 years. Under his direction the church purchased one acre of land and erected and dedicated a building for God's service. The church was named Canaan. Rev. T. A. Wood was the second pastor, serving only two years. Rev. Newsome Martin, of Suffolk, Virginia succeeded Rev. Wood and served in that capacity for twelve years. Rev. M. N. Zollicofer, of Littleton, North Carolina became Canaan's fourth pastor. During these 29 years of service, the mortgage was burned on the church. Under his leadership a choir was formed, two study rooms were added. Under his leadership abilities, we became stronger spiritually, financially, intellectually, and socially. Rev. G. W. Sharpe, of Portsmouth, Virginia became Canaan's fifth pastor. Under his direction The Missionary Circle came back into existence, other church clubs were expanded, and renovations to the church interior were performed. Dr. S. H. Latham was Canaan's sixth leader, and served for eighteen years. Renovations to the church's interior continued: the pulpit was refurnished, running water

and rest rooms were installed, the baptismal pool under the pulpit was installed, in addition to new church pews. During his leadership the church acquired a Hammond organ and a piano. Dr. S. H. Latham is credited with bringing "tithing" to Canaan Baptist Church, a practice still in existence today. It was through his vision and plan that Canaan's present edifice came into existence. Dr. J. E. Arrington became Canaan's seventh pastor, position he held for 36 years. He continued fostering the principles of "tithing." Under his leadership, the church moved into a new sanctuary. Dr. Arrington's leadership ability promoted physical, social and spiritual growth. Encompassed in the physical growth was a completely furnished educational building, consisting of an auditorium, five classrooms, janitorial and nurses aide room. Social history continued with the acquisition of playground equipment in a park-like setting. The park can accommodate walking, biking, volleyball, horseshoes, baseball and annual picnics. Spiritual growth was manifested by restoration of old members and acceptance of new members. The Gospel Choir was also established. Canaan has increased their fellowship with other area churches as well as outreach ministries to other parts of the country. As the newly elected pastor of this illustrious church, I will foster Canaan's rich traditions as well as establish new ideas that will serve both church and community in the new millennium.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

Literature Review

The focus of this research is “Preaching and Leadership for Church Growth in a Changing Community.” The context for this research is a rural county in Suffolk, Virginia. The researcher found himself in a precarious predicament while performing his pastoral duties at Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia. The researcher noted an unusual trend. The community is emerging into a vibrant metropolitan area while the church was holding fast to its rural traditions. Therefore, the community was forcing the church to change to meet the needs of its times. Normally the church spearheads the changes within the community. This concept of community dictating changes within the church has not been widely researched. Therefore, finding literature germane to the research focus has been an arduous task. The writer utilized poetry, prose, scriptures, lyrics and direct quotations to validate his research. Poetry was utilized to conjure emotions and provide imagery wherein standard text proved inadequate. Lyrics were utilized to convey the rhythm of the implied spirit. Scriptures were utilized to authenticate this work as having sound biblical base.

The biblical foundation for this work certifies this work as having a sound biblical foundation. The primary literature utilized in this section was the bible and other biblical

resource material. The King James Version of the bible is the source document for this work unless otherwise stated. In addition to the bible and other biblical resources, other relevant works will be highlighted. The Book of Nehemiah, I Corinthians, and Acts served as the inspiration behind this work.

***Breaking Barriers*¹**

Lyle D. Vander Broek provides an in-depth analysis of Acts as it relates to the Christian community. According to the author, relationships are at the crux of the matter in regards to the Christian community. He states that we must examine the Christian's willingness to gather together in order to measure the vitality of the relationship. He noted a decline in church attendance in the United States since the 1960's. He quotes church attendance having declined as much as twelve percent, while bible study and social educational programs have declined as much as fifty percent. He suspects the actual attendance could be lower, since survey respondents tend to over report involvement in the life of church. Vander Broek believes that a change in the attitude of the body of believers has contributed to the decline in attendance. He further noted that eighty percent of Americans who believe God believe that participation in church is not a necessary tenet of their faith. He contends that there are three distinct categories of Christians within the Christian community. The first is ignorant to the value of Christian community in the life of a disciple. These persons practice their faith in isolation from other believers. As I understand the text, the aforementioned group attends bedside Baptist Church. In other words they have their own private worship experience at home. The second attends

¹ Lyle D Vander Broek, *The Possibilities of Christian Community in a Lonely World: Breaking Barriers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002).

church regularly, having minimal contact with other church members during the week. They also have limited expectations from the Christian community. Regretfully, the preached word fails to convince them that fellowship is an essential component of the Christian experience. The third possesses an understanding of the church's communal potential, however they have become disappointed with their Christian community experience. If one were to assert the above as being factual then, undoubtedly, one could make the argument that the church has become dysfunctional at best. In order to understand the Apostle Paul's concept of community and how we respond to the issues of the day, we need to understand that the term community implies a shared agreement. At the heart of this shared agreement lies the essence of *koinonia*. Paul's references to *koinonia* in I Corinthians are numerous. Therefore, we must give particular focus to what we share and how we share. Paul addressed this issue in I Corinthians 1:9 wherein he reminded his hearers that they were called into the fellowship of His Son. I Corinthians is inundated with topics relating to the Christian community. I Corinthians lists communal barriers and the skills used by the Apostle Paul to navigate to victory. The book carefully explores the issues faced at Corinth in: community and Christian leaders I Corinthians 1-4, community and ethical boundaries I Corinthians 5-6, women and men in the community I Corinthians 7, 11:2-6, community and Christian freedom I Corinthians 8-10, community and class differences I Corinthians 11:17-34, community and spiritual gifts I Corinthians 12-14 and community and the resurrection I Corinthians 15-16. This writer's understanding of Vander Broek's work has led him to the conclusion that issues faced at Corinth yesterday are similar to the issues faced at Canaan Baptist Church today. A thorough understanding and acceptance of God's law brought about deliverance to the

people at Corinth. This writer believes God for the deliverance of transforming his congregation into a community-minded, God-loving, spirit-filled people.

The theological foundation of this work is built upon the writer's belief that theology is the sum total of acceptance and understanding of God's law and its application over our lives. Reviewed literature in this section revealed the works of authors Rainer, Hemphill and Oswald.

Eating the Elephant

Thom S. Rainer's *Eating the Elephant: Bite-Sized Steps to Achieve Long-term Growth in Your Church* was quoted in Ken Hemphill's book, *The Antioch Effect*. Rainer stated, "contemporary church growth plan can do more harm than good."² He explained that the key to lasting growth is best accomplished in tiny steps. It is his belief, and I concur, that tiny steps facilitate sensitive change, which occurs at a more comfortable pace. The same author noted,

The process of leading a traditional church is analogous to eating an elephant. It is a long term and deliberate process that must be implemented "one bite at a time." The author warned against the pitfalls when attempting a large task. One, do not become intimidated by the size of the task and ignore the task. Two, don't approach the task too quickly without time for proper planning and attainment of required resources. Effective growth occurs one step at a time.³

The Apostle Paul discussed this notion of planting seeds and building in the third chapter of I Corinthians. Most of the literature reviewed for this work suggests that vision and

² Thom S. Rainer, *Eating the Elephant* In Ken Hemphill, *8 Characteristics of Highly Effective Churches: The Antioch Effect* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 223-224.

³ Ibid.

change is a process that occurs over time. Reviewed literature further states that we must utilize time for preparation, articulation, implementation and evaluation of our goals.

Rainer cautioned that massive and sudden change is the other extreme that the pastor must avoid. According to Rainer, massive and sudden change can prove demoralizing and divisive to members. He states parenthetically “remember church members who hold tenaciously to the old paradigms are not ‘wrong’ while you are ‘right.’ They are children of God loved no less by the Father than those who prefer a different style.”⁴

8 Characteristics of Highly Effective Churches: The Antioch Effect⁵

Ken Hemphill discusses eight characteristics of highly effective churches.

1. **Supernatural power** is the result of pastor and people falling in love with God, God then empowers them to grow his church. 2. **Christ exalting worship** suggests that worship must focus on exalting and experiencing the living God so that the believers may become empowered. 3. **God connecting prayer** asserts that prayer yields positive results. Prayer connects human efforts with God’s sovereign power. No task should be contemplated without prayer. 4. **Servant leaders** states that growth comes from the head. The pastor has a responsibility to nurture his people that they may reach their full potential. 5. **Kingdom family relationship** asserts that the church must prove itself to be warm, secure, nourishing and challenging. The church must act like surrogate parents providing all of the necessary requirements for its children to become healthy, productive and caring. 6. **God-sized vision** declares that the vision must be God-centered and

⁴ Ibid., 224

⁵ Ibid.

supported by fasting and prayers. The vision requires a desire to change and radical obedience. 7. **Passion for the lost** states that a growing church must have a passion to reach the community and their world. This must be attained by any means necessary. This may require street evangelism. 8. **Maturation of believers** asserts that educating others to go out and minister should be the goal of every believer.

*Dynamic Spiritual Leadership*⁶

J. Oswald Sanders' book is a must for those persons aspiring to become a leader like Paul. The author skillfully describes the qualities of a dynamic leader. Paul noted that he was an ordinary man "a man like us"; however, through his love and dedication to the Lord, he did extraordinary things. Paul is an example of what faith can and will do. Paul was often noted for his complexity yet none could deny his sense of purpose. The life of Paul clearly reiterates what can happen when God is in the midst. Moreover, the story of Paul reveals God's role in his life from the beginning. Jeremiah chapter 1 provides proof, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee: and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."⁷ Ministers are set apart, called, appointed and charged to do God's will. God's will can be accomplished through fervent prayer. Paul is often described as "the prayer warrior." Paul viewed prayer as fundamental not supplemental. For many, prayer is supplemental. Paul believed that prayer was fundamental, the very matrix out of which his work was born. Paul believed in the power of prayer. His prayers conveyed sentiments of thanksgiving, praise and

⁶ J. Oswald Sanders, *Dynamic Spiritual Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1994).

⁷ Jeremiah 1: 5

intercession. Therefore fervent prayer exemplifies one of the few attributes of this dynamic leader.

The literature recorded in the historical foundation of this work is divided into the following subcategories: The Church, The African American Church and The Rural Church. The literature regarding the church displays the role of the church in shaping the lives of its members. Reviewed literature certifies that the church has played a vital role in providing educational opportunities. The literature concerning the church certifies the church as being pivotal in the lives of its members. In summary the church was more than a religious meeting place.

The literature regarding the African American Church certifies that the African American Church is a dominant institution in African American communities. The African American Church traditionally has fulfilled the needs of its people, as evidenced through church schools, mission and services, and the development of great leaders. The literature regarding the African American Church notes the highlights within the African American Church and the contributions of its members. This literature discusses slavery and its impact on the lives of Christians. The reviewed literature credits the African American Church with having more influence in molding the lives of African Americans than any other single factor as noted by Farah Khan in *The Black Church in 20th Century*. The literature revealed pivotal moments in the Black Baptist Church. The literature discussed the formation of religious organizations and its impact upon the African American religious experience.

Reviewed literature further asserts that “African American rural churches have a tradition of strength and fierce commitment to their communities.” The literature highlighted below chronicled the inception of religious organizations. This article was very

informative as it proves that we do not exist in a vacuum. The accomplishments of today exist due to the sacrifices of yesterday. The information recorded within this article helped me to piece together significant events in the life of the African American Church as well as the events that led to the establishment of national organizations. Undoubtedly, national religious organizations have impacted the way in which we carry out the mission of the Lord's work.

“The Convention Movement Of The Black Baptist Church”⁸

Jacqueline Trussell, Founder and President of BlackandChristian.com wrote an article highlighting the annual Baptist Convention. Included in this article were some pivotal moments in the history of the Black Baptist Church. She began this article by mentioning the inception of the first black church in the United States, The First Bryan Baptist Church, originally known as the First Colored Baptist Church of Savannah. The author draws a correlation to missionary societies and the black of associations and conventions among black Baptists. Lott Carey is acknowledged for establishing an African mission in West Africa in 1821. The author quotes another author, Leroy Fitts, who stated, “the evolution of an African mission was a strong motivating factor in the development of associations and conventions among black Baptist.”⁹ Trussell credits the Providence Baptist Association as the first attempt at organization beyond the local church. Providence Baptist Association was organized in Ohio in 1836. The second recorded attempt occurred in Illinois, 1838 with the Wood River Baptist Association. The

⁸ Jacqueline Trussell, “The Convention Movement of the Black Baptist Church,” <http://blackandchristian.com/articles/academy/trussell.shtml>.

⁹ Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 24.

author records other significant events which led to organized state conventions: 1840 American Baptist Missionary Convention came into existence, 1866 inception of North Carolina state Baptist Convention. The author notes that by 1870 all southern states had formed a Baptist Convention. Trussell asserts that it was the growth of the state conventions that led to the formation of the national organization. The article continues as the author addresses the emergence of the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America, 1895 which was the direct result of the formation of the following: Consolidated American Baptist Convention, 1867, Foreign Mission Baptist Convention of the USA, 1880, The American National Baptist Convention, 1886 and the Baptist National Education Convention, 1893. The African American Baptist Convention movement has withstood many changes, yet none can doubt its significance to African American religious life.

The literature concerning the rural church provides an understanding of the dynamics surrounding today's rural church. These were family churches where the policy came from the dominant family in the church. In many rural communities, they have provided the support to initiate and sustain social change. One writer said rural churches have a strong tradition of developing lay leadership by involving significant numbers of members in decision-making advocacy, community leadership and institutional development. All of the literature reviewed suggested that a shift in the demographic composition of the rural community occurred around 1950. This literature discusses and describes in significant details the connotations associated with the term "rural." The term "rural" refers to people living in towns, communities, and incorporated areas that have a population of 2,500 residents or less. This literature explored the required tenets for effective pastoral leadership in a rural setting. The literature concerning the rural church

provides an understanding of the unique dynamics of the rural church. The literature asserts that the greatest strength of the rural church lies in the loyalty of its members,

The context of my work is centered on the rural church. The challenge is to motivate the congregation to embrace and move within a changing community. However it is the author's contention that one must possess thorough knowledge of its people in order to facilitate effective leadership. Three books, among many, proved invaluable to this work: *The Purpose Driven Church*, *Transitioning*, and *The Lord's Harvest and the Rural Church*.

***The Purpose Driven Church*¹⁰**

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church, is considered an expert on church growth. His church is recognized as the fastest growing Baptist church in American history. The author utilized his church to explain principles, concepts and practices for authentic church growth. Warren suggests that we investigate the root of stagnation within the body of believers. The church must consider the question, what is keeping our church from growing? The church must then remove barriers in order for natural and normal growth to occur. Pastors must see themselves as part and parcel of the problems as well as the solutions. Pastors are part of the stratagem for change. Pastors must allow themselves to be utilized as change agents. Pastors must show themselves worthy of "calling" by setting positive examples. Ministry is described here as a journey (a marathon). The results are what matters. Hopefully, no pastor or minister will start and stop his journey in the same way. It is hoped that he or she will learn by trial and error, life

¹⁰ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995).

experiences and more in-depth theological and biblical study. It is hoped that a closer walk with the Lord will create a spiritual epiphany in the lives of all those who carry the gospel. Warren reminds us that the church is a living organism driven by many factors: tradition, personality, programs, buildings, finances, events and seekers. Yet this information matters not if there is not a clear understanding as to the purpose of the church. A biblical foundation must be the driving force of the church before authentic change can occur. Remember Matthew 6:33 states “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹¹

*Transitioning*¹²

Rick Warren crafted a pastor’s tool for leading church through transition. The book begins with the assertion that a vision is not a destination, but a journey. Having said that, a wise person prepares for the journey. According to the author, the vision must be God centered, active and an on-going process. Warren refers to the book of Nehemiah as being a study in vision; Warren noted that if one were to follow the steps of Nehemiah, one would find oneself with the necessary tenets to lead the church through transition. He highlights five steps of preparedness documented in the book of Nehemiah. **Data collection** is the first step in preparation for the vision. Data collection provides an opportunity to know one’s audience. **Holy discontent** is the second step. Holy discontent causes one to reject the status quo. Complacency hinders progress. **Fasting** is the third step. Warren reminds us that fasting should be incorporated in our search for God. He asserts that fasting is powerful and should not be underestimated. **Prayer** is the fourth

¹¹ Mat 6:33

¹² Rick Warren, *Transitioning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

step. Nehemiah was committed to prayer. Warren declares that those who talk to God the most usually hear God the best. Warren concludes that prayer is a prerequisite. **Waiting** is the fifth step. There is an old adage that “haste makes waste.” Isaiah proclaims that “They who wait upon the Lord will have renewed strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall walk and not faint.”¹³ The author declares that vision is a process which is dependent upon eight strategic steps for success: preparation, defining the vision, planting the vision, sharing the vision, implementing the vision, dealing with opposition, making course corrections, and evaluating results. The author states that the book of Nehemiah demonstrates his eight step strategic plan concept. The book of Nehemiah is divided into two distinct sections. Chapters one through five demonstrate the process of vision. Chapters five through thirteen demonstrate the results of the vision. The author’s assertion that vision is an ongoing process was enlightening. Often we focus our energies at the inception of the vision and the end result and expend little energy on the things that lay in between. I consider this book to be an invaluable resource for my journey.

The Lord’s Harvest and The Rural Church¹⁴

Dr. Hunter is a noted expert on the Church Growth Movement, having done extensive research on the rural church. Dr. Hunter has written a practical manual on the rural church. This writer considers the contents of the manual essential to understanding today’s rural church. This writer believes that a thorough understanding of the dynamics of the rural church will empower rural pastors to facilitate a growth movement within the

¹³ Isaiah 40:31

¹⁴ Kent R. Hunter, *The Lord’s Harvest and The Rural Church* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1993).

church. There are nine chapters within this small book. The book defines the term “rural,” describes 10 common characteristics germane to its members and endorses six directives essential for effective pastoral leadership. The author explores the power of the pastor. Dr. Hunter states: “Pastors have tremendous power in the congregation. They can either provide a strength and focus for a positive future, or they can be the bottleneck of progress. This happens in four ways instigate or stagnate, initiate or frustrate, propagate or suffocate and stimulate or intimidate.”¹⁵ I found this section extremely helpful for I believe that self-introspection is critical to a mission such as mine. Introspection requires examining one’s own thoughts and beliefs. The pastor must set the example if he desires the cooperation of the congregation. If the pastor has become rigid in his leadership, the pastor needs to acknowledge that and acquire new and more effective ways of leadership. If the church has become stagnant, the church needs to acknowledge the situation and collectively work to resolve the problem. A church mission of any significant magnitude requires the combined efforts of the pastor and people working together. Other issues discussed in *The Lord’s Harvest and The Rural Church* are: The Rural rainbow, Healing the Church’s Wounded Personality, Health and Vitality in the Rural Church, The Rural Pastor, Worship in the Rural Church, Rural Church Finances and Design for Growth. This instructional manual became an essential tool for this writer as he forged ahead preaching the gospel in the rural vineyard. I thank the author for this incredible piece of work. I have made every attempt to ingest and digest as much as humanly possible.

¹⁵ Ibid.

*Pastoral Leadership*¹⁶

Robert D. Dale devised a handbook for effective congregational leadership. In the fifth chapter of this handbook, Dale described four distinct leadership styles (Catalysts, Commander, Encouragers and Hermits) noted in the bible. While one may argue that there are many other leadership styles noted in the bible, this author chose to expound on four. Nehemiah, Esther, and Paul qualify as biblical examples for the Catalyst category. The judges, Moses during his early ministry and David illustrate the Commander category. Barnabas, Andrew and Ruth exemplified qualities of the Encourager category. King Saul, during the later years of his reign and Jeremiah display qualities of Hermit leadership style. Nehemiah's leadership style is at the crux of this research. Like Nehemiah, this researcher would like to become a catalyst for change within the context his ministry focus. It is impossible to discuss the characteristics of Nehemiah without mentioning his compassion. As the story of Nehemiah unfolds, we are struck by his compassion, he is weeping over the plight of Jerusalem and its citizens. It was out of Nehemiah's concern for his people that he acquired a vision. According to Dale, there are distinct characteristics, which qualify leaders as super leaders. Nehemiah is hailed as a super leader. Modeling is an essential characteristic of super leadership. Super leaders set goals and act on them, take initiative, find solutions, create opportunities and show passion for their work. Nehemiah's passion for his work is evident. Throughout the entire restoration process, Nehemiah worked as hard and long, but more visibly, than any of the others. Super leaders develop leaders from within their followers. Super leaders pose questions that allow followers to discover their own answers and resources, and thereby develop leadership abilities. Super

¹⁶ Robert D. Dale, *Pastoral Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001).

leaders don't hesitate to provide positive reinforcement, offer constructive criticism and display an optimistic attitude. Nehemiah was able to delegate effectively and developed leaders out of followers (Neh.3; 4:15-23). I consider this handbook to be an invaluable resource to my ministry as well as my research. I strongly recommend this handbook for all those interested in making a difference within his or her ministry, mission, community and life.

*A Heart For the City*¹⁷

John Fuder asserts that church does not exist within a vacuum. Church exists within communities and is subjected to the social issues that impact the community. Therefore, the church should develop various social ministries to meet the needs of its community. Fuder further implied that the collaboration between church and community is biblically sanctioned. Indeed, Jesus is the same today as he was yesterday. The love of Jesus and his promise for those who believe transcend time. The message of dignity and healing to the oppressed and relief to the poor is not a new message. Therefore, the same Jesus is the messenger and model for ministries today. Christians have the opportunity to show the world that Christ is still in control. In fact, Christ can do what tax dollars, politicians, and government agencies have failed to do. Fuder states that through Jesus' message his church can meet the needs of the people in the cities.

¹⁷ John Fuder, *A Heart For the City* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999).

***We Have This Ministry*¹⁸**

Authors Proctor and Taylor collaborated on this work to gear pastor's towards a greater understanding of their vocation. The premise was that a greater understanding would enable pastors to effectively capture and carry out the essence of their vocation. The book is divided into eight chapters that detail the importance of holding your office with dignity and caring for the people of God. This book offers the following concepts: The Pastors Commission, The Pastor's as Teacher, The Pastor as Intercessor, The Pastor as Administrator, The Pastor as Counselor, The Pastor and the Family Crisis, The Pastor and Diversity Liberation, and the Pastor and Political Realities. Proctor and Taylor devised an excellent resource manual for pastors. This resource manual provided an in-depth analysis on the responsibilities ascribed to being a pastor. A pastor's responsibility does not start and stop with Sunday's sermon. A pastor is a complex and demanding position. I strongly recommend this book for all those interested in entering the ministry.

¹⁸ Samuel D. Proctor and Gardener C. Taylor, *We Have This Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996).

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Historical

History clearly shows that the church has played a crucial role in community development. It can be easily said that the church has been the common thread that pulled the different entities of the community together. Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser states in their book, *Managing the Congregation*, that “mission of the church is determined by needs and opportunities resident in its environment . . . We understand that the mission of the church is to alleviate human needs that plague the body or crush the human spirit. These needs are more or less unique to every community.”¹ Although human needs might be unique to an extent in every community, the church has been looked upon in every community to play some role in helping to fulfill those needs. Harvie Conn asserted that

Churches have often been in the forefront of movements for social change. They are frequently involved in alleviating problems connected with hunger, poverty, and social, economic, and political injustice. They are at least five ways that churches are engaged in the pursuit of social justice in the city. They (1) build community or what some call social capital,” (2) provide social services, (3) participate in activities of advocacy on behalf of poor and marginalized peoples, (4) develop community organization at the local level, including political activism in connection with all levels

¹ Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Managing the Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 83.

of government (local, regional, and national), and (5) do community economic development.²

One would be hard pressed to identify any institution in the community that is not in some form or fashion influenced by the church. Harvie M. Conn, in his book, *The American City and Evangelical Church*, asserts, "The church became not only the spiritual center of the town, but its geographical and social focus as well. In the book, *Rural Churches and Community Integration*, author Louis Bultena states, "The church was more than a religious meeting place; it was a cultural nest, integrating families, social classes, and nationality groups. It gave its members a cultural identity and status and socialized them into the community."³

Much credit for the development of African American communities must be given to the African American Church. The African American Church, which has been called the Negro church and the black church, perhaps can be viewed as the matrix of the African American community from which the different institutions, values, and cultural identity of African American community people were hewed. It goes without saying, "Black churches have carried burdens and performed roles and functions beyond their boundaries of spiritual nature in politics, economics, education, music and culture."⁴ Carter G. Woodson contends that the black church "served as a Chamber of Commerce, educational facility

² Harvie M. Conn, *The American City and the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994), 31-32.

³ Louis Bultena, "Rural and Community Integration," *Rural Sociology* 9 (Sep 1994):257-64. Sonya Salamon, *Prairie Patrimony: Family, Farming & Community in the Midwest* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 47.

⁴ C Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 93.

and a social center.”⁵ He further states, “the ministry was one of the highest stations to which a black leader could aspire; the visibility and education available to the clergy was notable in a community that was often denied opportunity.”⁶

Historically, the African American community did not have public meeting places to discuss issues concerning the community. However, “black churches have played a major role in providing a meeting place for community events.”⁷ In many places which barred the African-American children from public schools, the church hall became the makeshift classroom with deacons and elders as the teachers of the three R’s.⁸ When some kind of formal education was permitted for African Americans, the Black church often served as the schoolhouse. During slavery, many Black Churches served as Underground Railroad stations for enslaved Africans that escaped. In the next century, the NAACP met in many churches immediately after the benediction. Traditionally, political candidates made their appeal to the African American people through the African American church. African-Americans are usually informed on how to vote through the African American Church. Staunton E. Smith Perkins says in his book, *Satan in the Pulpit*, “The Black Church in America in all of its many variations has served as the catalyzing agent in the greatest struggle any group of human beings has had to experience.”⁹

⁵ Carter G. Woodson, *The History of The Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921), 145.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lincoln and Mamiya, *Black Church*, 110.

⁸ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987), 101.

⁹ Staunton E. Smith Perkins, *Satan in the Pulpit* (Rocky Mount, NC: SES Development Corporation, 1981), 29.

The African American church has been a place where African American people come to share their burdens. C. Eric Lincoln shares that,

The black pilgrimage in America was made less onerous because of their religion. Their religion was the organizational principle around which their life was structured. Their church was their school, their forum, their political arena, their social club, their art gallery, their conservatory of music, It was lyceum and gymnasium as well as sanctum sanctorum. Their religion was the peculiar sustaining force that gave them the strength to endure when endurance gave no promise, and the courage to be creative in the face of their own dehumanization.¹⁰

There are countless theories surrounding the formation of the African American Church. One theory suggests that the African American church was derived to fulfill the unique needs of its people. Cain Hope Felder shared his view when he wrote; “It is no exaggeration to say that the Black church of America was born out of the inability of whites to accept the full humanity and equality of Blacks.”¹¹ Gayraud S. Wilmore says that the Black Church “was born out of the experience of being black and understanding blackness to be something connected with being held in bondage and needing to be free.”¹² Dwight N. Hopkins ascertains, “the only liberated place that enslaved black folk controlled was the Invisible Institution, the foundation for the black Christian church.”¹³ Perry E. Henderson records that “Slavery, racism, and mutilated family relationships led to the formation of the black church.”¹⁴ My mentor, Dr. Terry Thomas, summarizes the formation of the Black Church: “There are two reasons basically for the derivation of the

¹⁰ C. Eric Lincoln, Foreword to the first edition of Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), vii.

¹¹ Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 102.

¹² Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 14.

¹³ Dwight N. Hopkins, *Shoes that Fit Our Feet* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 1.

¹⁴ Perry E. Henderson, *The Black Church Credit Union* (Lima, OH: Fairway Press, 1990), 55.

Black Church and its mission. First, the Black Church was derived basically out of the inability of other branches of Zion to be recourse for enslaved Africans. Second, the Black church came out of a need to meet and address the unique needs of enslaved Africans generated from their circumstances in life.” “Historically, black churches have been the most important and dominant institutional phenomenon in African American communities.”¹⁵ In referring to the African American church as the Negro church, Benjamin Quarles says of the black church,

The role of Negro church like that of its pastor, did not stop with Sunday service. The Negro's church was a highly socialized one, performing many functions. The church served as a community center, where one could find relaxation and recreation. It was a welfare agency, dispensing help to the sicker and poorer members. It was a training school in self-government in the handling of money and management of business.¹⁶

During slavery, churches were centers for development of education and leadership and agents for the transmission of cultural values. After emancipation, the functions of the churches increased, as they became agents for education, employment and social services. Evidence suggests that the very first church built specifically for blacks in America was a Baptist church built near Savannah, Georgia, around 1773.

Andrew Bryan, a slave and the first pastor, established the church January 20, 1788. It was originally known as the First Colored Baptist Church of Savannah. Bryan is said to have been a pupil of the Rev. George Liele, another slave who purchased his freedom and gained attention for his ministry to the plantation missions of the South. Liele is also credited with organizing a missionary society in Jamaica in 1783.¹⁷

¹⁵ Lincoln and Mamiya, *Black Church*, 92.

¹⁶ Quarles, *Negro in the Making of America*, 101.

¹⁷ Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 24.

Undoubtedly education for the African Americans was both test and challenge. It is evident that the churches' independence was dependent upon the education of its members. Following the Civil War, the church took on a new, more important role in the community. Church organizations and benefactors, both domestic and foreign, helped establish schools and churches to educate the newly freed blacks. It is evident that the African American Church took the responsibility of educating its people. For many African Americans, Sunday school resonates as their first organized learning experience. It was not uncommon for the church to be dubbed as a schoolhouse as well as a church.

Some of the most prestigious African American universities began in the basements of African-American churches. Morehouse College, Atlanta Georgia was started in the basement of Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta in 1866. Spelman College started as a school, which met in the basement of Butler Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Tuskegee, Alabama. Selma University, an African American Baptist School started by the efforts of African American Baptists in Alabama, held its initial classes at the St. Phillips Street Baptist Church of Selma, Alabama.¹⁸

It would be extremely difficult to argue, but the Black Church in America has long been recognized as the most independent stable and dominant institution in black communities.

The African American church became a focal point for leadership ability. Many well-respected African American leaders began in the church, such as Richard Allen, Adam Clayton Powell and Rev. Theodore J. Jemison.

Bishop Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal was born 1760, a slave of Benjamin Chew of Philadelphia. Shortly after his birth, he along with other family members were sold to a planter residing near Dover, Delaware. Coming under

¹⁸ Dr. Terry Thomas.

Christian influence, he was converted in 1777 and began his ministry three years later.

Struck with the genuineness of his piety, his master permitted him to conduct prayers and to preach in his house, he himself being one of the first converts of this zealous messenger of God. Rev. Allen worked as a laborer and performed menial tasks, such as wood cutting and hauling. He would preach whenever he got the opportunity.

I preached at different places in the city. My labour was much blessed. I soon saw a large field open in seeking and instructing my African brethren, who had been a long forgotten people and few of them, attended public worship. I preached in commons, in Southwark, Northern Liberties, and wherever I could find an opening. I frequently preached twice a day. I raised a society in 1786 of forty-two members. I saw the necessity of erecting a place of worship for the coloured people. I proposed it to the most respectable people of colour in this city: but here I met with opposition.¹⁹

He proposed to establish a separate place of worship for people of color, but was dissuaded from doing so by the protest of whites and certain Negroes. Because his preaching power attracted such large numbers, the church management proposed to separate the Negroes. First they moved them from their usual seats and placed them around the wall. When they arrived on Sunday morning they were met at the door and instructed to go into the gallery. Rev. Allen and followers expected to occupy their previous seats. It was apparent to Rev. Allen that segregation was imminent. However, Rev. Allen could not have been prepared for the manner in which they would bring about the separation. In a drastic move to promote segregation, Rev. Allen and Absalom Jones, along with William White and others, were snatched off their knees while in prayer. The Negroes arose and withdrew from the church in a body. This was the beginning of the

¹⁹ Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (Philadelphia, PA: Martin & Boden, Printers, 1833), 60.

independent Free African Society organized by Allen. Richard Allen was the first to propose the African church. In fact, he put the first spade in the ground to dig a cellar for the same. It was the first African American church or meetinghouse that was erected in the United States.²⁰

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on November 29, 1908. At the age of six months, he moved with his parents to New York City, where his minister father developed Abyssinian Baptist Church into one of the largest congregations in the United States. After attending public schools and City College of New York, Powell graduated from Colgate University in 1930 and received an M.A. degree in religious education from Columbia University in 1931. Impressive as his educational credentials may have been, it was his theology that lifted him from the son of a minister to national prominence. Powell believed in the power of the church to redress the atrocities perpetuated by mankind. While assistant minister and business manager of Abyssinian Church in 1930, he used picket lines and mass meetings to demand reforms at Harlem Hospital in New York City. Harlem Hospital had dismissed five doctors from its staff because of their race. Powell continued his efforts of social redress: in 1932, he administered an extensive church sponsored relief program providing food, clothing and temporary jobs for thousands of Harlem's homeless and those without a job. During the Depression years, Powell established himself as a civil rights leader. He organized mass meetings, rent strikes and public campaigns that forced New York City businesses to hire and begin promoting blacks. In 1936, he succeeded his father as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church. In 1941, he was elected to New York City Council. He served as publisher for a

²⁰ Ibid., 16.

weekly newspaper from 1941-1945. He was elected to Congress in 1944, representing the Twenty-second district. His Congressional career spanned twenty-two years. It is abundantly clear that the vision and commitment of one can make a difference for all.

Reverend Theodore J. Jemison is a man of great distinction for having made significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. “Before Dr. King had a dream, before Rosa kept her seat, and before Montgomery took a stand, Baton Rouge played its part.”²¹ Reverend Theodore J. Jemison, past president of the National Baptist Convention (1982-1994), along with Willis Reed and the United Defense League organized the first successful African American bus boycott in the south. Rev. Jemison grew tired of systemic racism. He grew weary of the way in which the city bus system treated black folks, who at this time comprised 80% of its ridership. The situation came to head in January 1953 when the city raised the bus fare from ten cents to fifteen cents. There were designated seats in the front of the bus reserved for whites, as there were designated seats in the back of the bus reserved for blacks. The whites were given first preference if the bus became full. This practice did not sit well with Jemison. He was further outraged as he watched countless busses pass his church with black folks standing in the back of the bus while the seats reserved for whites remained unoccupied. He appeared before Baton Rouge city council on February 11, 1953 in efforts to secure more seats for blacks on the bus. A compromise was reached and city council invoked a new Ordinance 222. Ordinance 222 abolished reserved seating. Under Ordinance 222: blacks were allowed to fill the bus from back to front while whites were allowed to fill the bus from front to back on a first come first serve basis. However, this new ordinance went un-enforced for several months. African

²¹ Marc Sternberg, npr.org/display-pages/features/feature-1304163.html.

Americans demanded enforcement of this law, after a city bus driver manhandled a female passenger. A few bus drivers were suspended for ignoring the ordinance. The city bus drivers went on a four-day strike in retaliation for these reprimands. On June 18, 1953, under the direction of Rev. Theodore J. Jemison and the United Defense League, a bus boycott was invoked against Ordinance 222. Although the boycott lasted a mere eight days, the ramifications of this historical event have been long lasting. This boycott served as a paradigm for others to follow. Reverend Martin Luther King is credited with organizing the Montgomery Alabama bus boycott and the civil rights movement. In 1955, Dr. King sought counsel from Rev. Theodore J. Jemison regarding the plans that were used to coordinate the Baton Rouge Bus Boycott. This information is provided to reiterate the fact that the African American Church has been a focal point for great leaders as noted: Rev. Richard Allen, Rev Adam Clayton Powell, Rev. Theodore J. Jemison and Rev. Martin Luther King.

Historically, the African American Church has met the needs of its people, evident through missions and services. Clearly its commitment to mission and services echo from old tiny farm-like structures to present day cathedrals. It is not the size of the churches' membership, but the compassion of its heart that propels the African American Church to met the needs of its people. Perhaps there is no other name synonymous with missions among the Baptists as one of Virginia's native sons, Lott Carey. Lott Carey born a slave in Farmville, Virginia. Records suggest that he was hired out when he was young and was subjected to influences that caused him to be a man of irreverent and extreme habits, while his parents were of the higher class. In 1807, he heard a sermon from the third chapter of

John, declaring, "Notwithstanding what I say unto you, you must be born again."²² Lott Carey was so moved by the message that he immediately obtained a copy of the New Testament. He taught himself to read by studying John 3.

Upon developing into a spiritual man, he was made superintendent of all laborers in the tobacco warehouse in which he was working in Richmond. Not long thereafter he received permission to serve as exhorter in the First African Baptist Church of that city, the membership, then being about 2,000, required the services of a number of assistant pastors. Lott Carey reached a new stage development in the fall of 1813, when Luther Rice, who had just returned from the East, appeared in that city preaching rousing sermons urging Baptists to enter upon and to support the work of missions in foreign fields. In November of that year the Richmond Foreign Missionary Society was organized . . . This new body had for one of its objects mission work in foreign fields, the national interest therein excited also a deep interest among the negro members of the churches in Richmond. Two years later, therefore the Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society, with Lott Carey as the moving spirit, was formed with the sole object of sending the gospel into Africa . . . As no one volunteered to go abroad to extend this mission work, Lott Carey himself determined to go to Africa, accompanied by Collin Teague. The Board of the Baptist Triennial Convention therefore, duly appointed them as missionaries to Liberia. In 1821 Carey and others set sail for Africa. The works of Lott Carey gives credence to the churches role in mission services.²³

Geographically, the Black Church has perhaps made its biggest impact in the rural community. "The 1890 census, the first to give an urban-rural breakdown of the black population, indicates that nine out of ten black people lived in the South and more than 80 percent of them in rural areas designated as the black belt." The rural congregation fed and housed the voter registration volunteers and were the centers for political agitation and protest in their communities.

²² Woodson, *History of The Negro Church*, 138.

²³ Ibid., 138-139.

The crux of my mission involves motivating a rural church to action. It is important to understand the dynamics and characteristics of the African American rural church. Farah Khan states,

The Black rural clergy that often held secular jobs in order to support themselves economically. Much of the black rural congregation was poor and although fiercely devoted to the pastor, could not adequately take care of the pastor's economic needs. The churches did not provide pension benefits or health insurance, and this forced the clergy to work long beyond their retirement age. Due to their lack of resources, black rural churches did not participate in many outreach programs, and very seldom supported black institutions devoted to higher learning. Despite these shortcomings, the greatest strength of the black rural church lies in the loyalty of its members towards each other and to the church. Even today, the rural serves not only as a religious institution, but also as a social club, a political arena, an art gallery, and a conservatory of music. In effect, the lives of the black rural church members are centered around their church.²⁴

Outside of the family, the church represented the only other organized social existence. The rural communities in the South were named after their churches. In fact, the Negro population in the rural south has been organized in "church communities, which represented their widest social orientation and the largest social groups in which they found an identification. Moreover, since the Negro was an outsider in the American community, it was the church that enlisted his deepest loyalties. Therefore, it was more than an amusing incident to note some years ago in a rural community in Alabama that a Negro when asked to identify the people in the adjoining community replied: "The nationality in there is Methodist."²⁵

In order to comprehend the necessary tenets for preaching for church growth in a changing community, one must understand the dynamics of the community. Suffolk, Virginia was once considered rural. The older homes are farther apart than those in most cities. However, the newer homes are in close proximity to one another. Rural is not

²⁴ Farah Khan, "The Black Church in the 20th Century, Religious Traditions of the African Diaspora," <http://dickinsg.intrasun.tcnj.edu/diaspora/church.html>.

²⁵ E Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 53-62.

necessarily a place but a perception or mind-set. Rural for many is a way of life. It is a way in which some people view the world. A rural mind-set impacts the individual's socialization. It shapes and forms the individual religious experiences as well as dictates the family structure. Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia is indeed rural because of its mind-set.

The dictionary describes rural in basically three ways: open, rustic and agriculturally oriented. The first definition is the traditional way of describing a rural church. A better definition is: A rural church is a congregation of Christian people who live an agriculturally oriented life-style.²⁶

The term rural has many implications. The implication behind the term rural is largely dependent upon the source.

The designation of rural in much of the literature comes from the definition given by the United States Census Bureau. Depending upon who is determining the particular size, a rural place will be defined as being a non-metropolitan area where less than a certain number of people live. Or rural churches could be described as churches located in a community of 2,500 or less population, which have an average attendance of 25 to 100 people in worship on Sunday mornings. Churches classified as rural in the traditional way are not necessarily alike. Viewing them as such is not only inaccurate but also can lead to stereotypes that are detrimental for planning, program development, the creation of resources by the denomination, and the training of professional church workers.²⁷

Kent Hunter, considered an expert on the Church Growth Movement, stated that in order to effectively lead the rural church toward change, one must understand rural orientation. According to Hunter, there are ten common characteristics germane to rural life. The ten common characteristics are: close knit family units, a strong sense of camaraderie among insiders, good communication, strong loyalty to the home church, the

²⁶ Kent R. Hunter, *The Lord's harvest and the Rural Church*, (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Press, 1993), 16.

²⁷ Ibid., 14.

agricultural calendar is important, independent nature of the rural individual, rural financial world, sometimes the rural rate of change is slower, and the reality of risk and pragmatism.

1. ***Close knit families***—everyone in the church appears related. Sunday morning worship is a like a family reunion. This concept is good for insiders in the church. However, an outsider may feel a sense of detachment or alienation. One way to counteract this situation would be to have the visitor come with a member of the church.

2. ***A strong camaraderie among insiders***—the rural church is conducive to fostering long-term relationships. The longevity of the rural mind-set is an asset for community relationships if you are an insider. The disadvantage of this concept is taking for granted that you know a particular individual who does not go to church. I've known him for years and I've known him to come to church.

3. ***Communication is good***—communication happens freely in rural communities, based on the two factors of close-knit families and a strong sense of camaraderie. Church members in rural areas can get the word out quickly. However let's hope the information being disseminated is positive. This informal way of communication can lend itself to some nasty gossip.

4. ***Strong loyalty to the home church***—because the rural church has close knit family units, there is an inherent loyalty to the home church. People tend to have a healthy sense of ownership. This strong sense of ownership if not tempered could evolve to an unhealthy sense of possessiveness. Rural church members are quick to state that this is our church. We must be mindful that the church is the Lord's house.

5. ***The agricultural calendar is important***—often rural church members believe the calendar year begins with Advent. The leaders of the rural church must be sensitive to the agricultural calendar, which dictates life in the rural community. There are times when the crops take precedence as farmers are dependent upon harvesting. This brings to mind my quest to preach and lead with cultural relevancy.

6. *Independent nature of the rural individual*—life in the agricultural community has created rugged individualism. The rural family is often a good example of teamwork; many of the members are working chores by themselves. Independence is a way of life. The independent spirit of the rural church provides it with great stamina. But this independent spirit can pose great challenges to the church, as it would be extremely difficult to

cultivate a cooperative spirit. **7. *Rural financial world***—the financial world of the rural person is complex. According to some farmers it is difficult to assess giving in relations to crop loss. Helping the rural person develop a financial giving pattern is challenging.

8. *Sometimes the rural rate of change is slow*—in the rural community change is often slower. Change is hard for all people. We are creatures of habit, and anything that changes a habit makes us uncomfortable. In the rural church, change may be more difficult for the old-timers of the community. They may be more conservative in their attitude towards change. One of the best ways to help people accept change is to bring them on board

early. **9. *Reality of risk***—the rural person is familiar with risk. Agriculture is a business of risk. For the rural person risk is a way of life. Christ calls people to walk by faith, not by sight. The Holy Spirit, by His nature, calls people to take a leap of faith. The rural church can tap that willingness to risk and that boldness of faith and use it not only to help people plant cotton or harvest apples or raise cattle but also to plant churches, harvest Christians and raise disciples. If that willingness to step out in faith can be harnessed in the rural church, a tremendous force for the growth of the Kingdom can be unleashed.

10. *Pragmatism*—rural people are not high in theory. They are practical people who live off the land. When it comes to the rural church, the people are very pragmatic in their approach. They won't tolerate a minister who is purely academic. The rural church is not wasteful with its resources. Programs are useful. Expenditures are realistic. As the

pragmatic rural church develops strategies along these lines, its very tone of practicality will develop receptivity among those in the community.²⁸ Considerable attention has been given to the personality of the rural church. A successful growth ministry is dependent upon pastor and people working together. The author has listed six directives for pastoral leadership in the rural church that will help move the church toward quality and quantity growth. The directives are highlighted below.

1. ***Vision casting***—the pastor will help mirror the vision to the members of the congregation. The pastor should help the people develop a clear understanding of who they are as God's people, what God has called the church to do and to be and what opportunities for mission and ministry exist in the surrounding community.
2. ***Looking beyond***—the pastor who is leading the rural church toward growth will help the church look beyond itself. He will influence families to move away from a self-centered perspective of the congregation to a balanced understanding of the church as a gathering form of community (which is healthy and profitable) and an equipping center to move out into the world. The pastor will help the congregation become visitor sensitive. This may include providing visitor-parking signs, welcome signs, signs to the rest room and greeters at the door.
3. ***Seeing the community***—the pastor can provide leadership to help the church diagnose itself and analyze its community. He will help identify the unchurched population in the area. As the pastor leads the church toward seeing the community, he will help them identify their place in the immediate region. Is the

²⁸ Ibid., 19-38.

church in the best location? Should it move? Are signs needed at major roads to direct people to the church?

4. ***Setting goals for growth***—the rural pastor will help the congregation measure its effectiveness and develop a sense of accountability. How effective is Vacation Bible School? How can we measure that effectiveness? What has been our growth in adult Sunday school over the last five years? The pastor will lead each area of the church to develop its own goals.

5. ***Cheerleading***—the rural pastor will cheer the congregation as a regular part of pastoral duties. Laypeople in rural churches respond positively to encouragement. One of the key roles of a pastor is to build the corporate self-esteem of the congregation. The pastor will encourage people when they feel discouraged. He will challenge and coax people to try what others have said might be impossible. He will stretch their understanding of their own capabilities, individually and as a congregation.

6. ***In for the long haul***—the pastor's long-term commitment will help the church develop long-term goals and plans. The pastor will continue to communicate a commitment to career and vocation in that setting. The pastor will let the people know that he or she is there by choice, not because he or she was runner-up in a race with another pastor for a suburban congregation. The pastor will put down roots in the community to provide whatever symbols possible to signify the long-term commitment to this body of Christ in the rural setting.²⁹

²⁹ Ibid., 102–104.

I believe that this in-depth exploration into the nature of the rural personality along with the six pastoral directives will help me to motivate my congregation to embrace change.

Biblical Foundation

An Old Testament model of leadership for growth in a changing community is Nehemiah. The book of Nehemiah primarily deals with the rebuilding of a city that had experienced desecration because of war. However, the end of hostilities did not lead to an effort toward rebuilding and providing an opportunity for the city to grow. Therefore, the city was not able to provide the type of witness that God was seeking for the city he had chosen as the capital for his people. Robert Linthicum in his work *City of God City of Satan* argues that the city is God's creation and as believers the church has a responsibility of helping the city to reach its God intended potential.

When Nehemiah hears of the condition of the city of his fathers, he sat down and wept and mourned for days. Nehemiah's anguish led to prayer and fasting to determine what action he might take to make the city of his father what God had intended for that city.

It is the researcher's belief that in a model of leadership for growth in a changing community prayer is vital. Prayer is a theological act that speaks to the potential leader-acknowledged limitations and the need for guidance by a power outside of him/herself. In the Old Testament, we find story after story of how leaders and potential leaders engaged in prayer before determining what action to take. The Nehemiah narrative clearly places Nehemiah's prayer as a critical reason for Nehemiah finding favor with King Artaxerxes and being granted permission to return to Jerusalem to participate in a rebuilding effort.

However, Provan, Long and Longman in their work, *A Biblical History of Israel*, offer another potential reason for the King's kindness.

"Recent research into this time period suggests that the King's desire to praise God might have been bolstered by concerns of a more earthly type. K. Hoglund set the stage for the most recent understanding of the Persian motivation for the work of Ezra and Nehemiah when he placed their work within the boarder framework of the military-political events of their day. His reading of the Biblical text was informed by archaeological discovery of a distinctive type of fortress in Yehud built during the middle of the Fifth Century. In addition, Greek sources told of events in the area as well. What emerges from this study is the idea that Artateres bolstered Yehud in order to have a friendly and reasonable string ally to protect the border of his empire against the threat from Greece and Egypt." Whatever the reason for Artaxerxes allowing the exiles to return and rebuild the city, it is clear that Nehemiah was the catalyst for the rebuilding effort. In order for growth to take place in a changing community someone must be the catalyst to ignite the activities and processes that will lead to growth. To that end, Nehemiah was a catalyst leader. Robert Dale in his work, *Pastoral Leadership*, identifies several leadership models and one of those models is a catalyst leader. Dale distinguishes the traits of catalyst leaders as 1) persons who clearly state the case and need for change; 2) persons who plan their actions carefully; and 3) persons who refuse the fellowship of those who are enemies to the project. Using Dale's model of catalyst leadership, Nehemiah fits that model exactly.

Leadership guru John Maxwell aids in this assessment of Nehemiah as a catalyst by stating the following: "Nehemiah as leader that would see further than others see, more than others see and before others see." In order to provide leadership for growth in a

changing community, the researcher believes that the catalyst leadership model employed by Nehemiah works best. To bring about growth in a changing community the pastor (leader) will need the assistance of others. The researcher has discovered several critical ways in which the Nehemiah narrative reflects the vital element of collaboration.

First, Nehemiah receives permission from the King to return to Jerusalem to begin rebuilding of the city. This permission may be akin to a building permit where the governing authority provides the rights to build. Leadership for church growth in a changing community may require the church to seek building permits to develop a faculty that would be able to accommodate the growth. Therefore the leader needs to be aware of all the legal requirements for attending the necessary permits for new construction or renovations.

Secondly, Nehemiah receives letters from the King to obtain the necessary materials for the rebuilding efforts. "If it please the King let the letters be given me to the governors of the province beyond the river that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the King's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gate of the fortress of the temple and for the wall of the city and for the house which I shall occupy. And the King granted what I asked. . . ."

Nehemiah 2:6-8. In a day of faith-based initiatives, the church may need to investigate what sources of government funding may be available to produce church growth in a changing community. Nehemiah's letters from the King were a source of funding the rebuilding project. Without the governmental funding he received, the project would have been much more difficult. The Nehemiah narrative also demonstrates that Nehemiah only sought government funding for the greatest needs of the community, the fortress for the city to protect its inhabitants. Every leader will need to perform a community assessment

of the greatest need that must be met to allow for growth. Once the assessment is complete, the leader may discover a willingness for government participation in the areas of mutual interest.

Thirdly, Nehemiah has the assistance of the people outside of the community who go with him to the community to participate in the rebuilding process. Leadership for church growth in a changing community must constantly be in search for possible partners that will assist in meeting needs and helping the church to grow. These partnerships may be government-sponsored or private-sponsored partnerships. The partnerships allow for collaboration building that creates stakeholders, working together to build a better community. An example of such a partnership would be Habitat for Humanity where the builders from outside the community come to build houses for those in need inside the community.

Fourth, Nehemiah has the assistance of those inside the community as well. Leaders must be careful that they work just as hard on building partnerships in the community as they do outside the community. Partnerships inside the community create a broad base of stakeholders working together to build the best possible community in the midst of change and help persons to see the vital role the church plays in that process. Robert Dale states, "One characteristic of Nehemiah that helped him empathize with others was his ability for both and thinking. Both men and women joined in the rebuilding efforts. All kinds of skilled and unskilled persons offered their energies to the restorative enterprise. He united both the folks who lived inside the ruined walls and those who resides outside the city. He combined building and defending activities. These both and solutions indicated Nehemiah's breath and flexibility. Since no one felt overlooked or unimportant all apparently felt included and supported."

Nehemiah's catalyst leadership style led to a successful building project and created an environment in which the city of Jerusalem could experience growth and security in changing times.

The New Testament Biblical Perspective

Since its initial conception, the willingness to embrace change has been an essential element in the continuous growth and the development of the church. As the church moved into different regions and cultures, the church had to adapt to those settings to communicate and plant the Christian faith. "Within seven or eight years after the death of Jesus, separate communities existed in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Syria. In twenty years there were communities in Cyprus and Asia Minor; after twenty-five years communities flourished throughout Macedonia Achaia and possibly Dalmatia. Thirty years after Jesus was killed, there was a Christian community in Rome."³⁰ Wayne A. Meeks asserts that, "within a decade of the crucifixion of Jesus, the village culture of Palestine had been left behind, and the Greco-Roman city became the dominant environment of the Christian movement."³¹ Luke Timothy Johnson in his work, *The Writing of the New Testament*, argues that one of the important factors of the Christian movement was the memory of Jesus. But as the church began to spread into different regions that had implication on how the memory of Jesus would be articulated, shared and expressed. Johnson wrote

The rapidity of Christianity's growth had real implications for the memory of Jesus. It meant that his memory had to be transmitted and preserved through new and changing circumstances. An

³⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writing of the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 127-128.

³¹ Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 11.

immediate and fundamental transition was from a predominately rural setting-presupposed by most of Jesus' words- to the urban context addressed by Paul and Peter. Some linguistic adjustments were also required. Greek was spoken throughout the empire, and there were Greek-speaking Christians even in the earliest community. But the present Greek form of Jesus' words often suggests the presence of an Aramaic substratum.³²

The spread of the Christian Movement was carried out by divers messengers into divers cultures. Therefore, it required adjustment to new circumstances. It would not be an understatement to say that Christianity exhibited great variety.

Even the foundational group of people who constituted the first church immediately had to embrace the challenge of change. Their challenge to change was in their perspective on certain theological views and rituals. This challenge to change came from their religious affiliation prior to converting to the Christian faith. The initial members of the early church were Jews. The Christian Movement began as a sect within the commonwealth of Israel. Donald J. Selby, author of the book, *Introduction to the New Testament*, holds that the first stage of the Church was within Judaism.³³ Raymond E. Brown in his work on the New Testament says, "The first believers in Jesus were Jews; perhaps the authors of the NT were Jews."³⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson holds that a knowledge of first-century Judaism is a precondition for the intelligent reading of the New Testament.³⁵ "The symbols of the New Testament are fundamentally those of Judaism, to the extent that the first Christian writings can fairly be considered part of the first-century

³² Johnson, *Writing of the New Testament*, 128.

³³ Donald J. Selby, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan Publisher, 1971), 328.

³⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 63.

³⁵ Johnson, *Writing of the New Testament*, 43.

Jewish literature.”³⁶ James M. Efrid, a New Testament scholar, argued that the author of the Gospel of Matthew from was a Palestinian Jewish-Christian whose orientation of the gospel was for a Jewish community and society to bolster their faith.³⁷ Wayne A. Meeks. looks at the social world of the ministry of the Apostle Paul in his book, *The First Urban Christians*. He states in his book that “it is now generally acknowledged that no one can understand the peculiar form of the early Christianity we call Pauline without first gaining some understanding of contemporaneous Judaism.”³⁸ None would argue that the initial different groups of people that comprised the early church as the church spread from the rural settings even into urban areas, orchestrated their religious understanding by Judaism.

The different sects within Judaism made the demand to embrace change even more challenging to the members of the first church. It is perhaps not thought of in this manner, but Judaism was by no means monolithic in the first century.³⁹ It consisted of numerous parties or sects such as the Sadducees, the Pharisees, Essenes or Covenanters, Zealots and Herodians.⁴⁰ “The Judaism of the first century was anything but uniform.”⁴¹ To say the least, the church was derived out of a complex setting.

Nevertheless, coming out of Judaism the initial members of church had to adjust their understanding, definitions and views on many different aspects of their belief. For instance, their eschatological expectation had to change. The Christian faith in its

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ James M. Efrid, *The New Testament Writings* (United States: John Knox Press, 1980), 45.

³⁸ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 32.

³⁹ E. Glenn Hinson, *The Early Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18-19.

⁴¹ Johnson, *Writing of the New Testament*, 43.

eschatological expectation believed that Messiah had come. Judaism looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. E. Glenn Hinson in his book, *The Early Church*, addresses the difference in the eschatological expectation of Judaism versus Christianity. He wrote, "One difference was in the eschatological expectations. Whereas the other sects looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, Christianity looked backward from the vantage point of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The age to come had dawned."⁴²

Since the early church came out of Judaism, the church's forms of worship initially were governed by Judaism. Early on, the lines separating Christianity from Judaism were not established. Subsequently, the early church continued to worship in the Temple and in the synagogues. The early church, according to Acts 2:46, went as a body to the Holy Temple every day.⁴³ Timothy Johnson writes that "both in Jerusalem and in the Diaspora, Jewish Christians shared in the worship of the synagogue, at least for a time."⁴⁴ However, that soon changed as Christians started moving away from worship in the temple and synagogues and began to meet in each other's houses. "The dominant place for Christian worship in the New Testament period was the house. Even before Pentecost, Acts shows us the Galilean disciples gathering in an upper room for prayer (Acts 1:13), and the first believers who attended temple services were also "breaking bread in their houses (Acts 10:33; 16:32; 18:7; 20:7-12) and to pray (12:12)."⁴⁵ "The meeting places of the Pauline

⁴² Ibid., 19-20.

⁴³ Hinson, *The Early Church*, 42.

⁴⁴ Johnson, *Writing of the New Testament*, 130.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 131.

groups . . . were private houses.”⁴⁶ Not only did the place of worship change, but the influence of Judaism on worship began to dwindle as the church moved into a different region. Hinson asserts that “Worship at Corinth differed substantially from that at Jerusalem. Although the church in Corinth began in the synagogue, it did not remain their long (Acts 18:16-17), and the Corinthian letters do not show much evidence of synagogue influence on worship.”⁴⁷

Those Christians who came out of Judaism were also required to change their sign of initiation into the community. The Jewish ritual of circumcision was the sign of initiation into the Jewish faith. However, that changed over a period of time to baptism as the sign of initiation into the Christian community (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38,41;8:12,36;(18;10:48). The Passover Meal was a remembrance of the exodus. The Christian meal, the Lord Supper, was a remembrance of what Jesus had said and done. When members of the Church really begin to isolate themselves from Judaism, the term “Christian” was given as their identity (Acts 11:26). “If previously people could not tell the difference, now they could.”⁴⁸

The church constantly has had to embrace change as the church grew and expanded. So it should not be a great threat to a church setting, like the rural that is changing to suburban, to have to change to meet the needs of a changing community. An excellent New Testament paradigm that gives a good example of the church forced to administer change in its structure because of the change within the Christian community is Acts 6:1-7.

⁴⁶ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 75.

⁴⁷ Hinson, *The Early Church*, 54.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

As with rural setting, the change in Acts 6:1-7 was the consequence of growth. Acts 6:1a says, "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied." The disciples continued to increase in number. In addition to increasing in numbers, the ethnicity of the disciples began to diversify. Which means that the community had begun to undergo change.

In the Christian community were two groups: Hellenists, Greek speaking believers and Hebrews, Aramaic-speaking believers. In ancient time Hellas was the name for Greece, and native Greek were called Hellenes. The Hellenist of Acts 6 were Christians who as Jews had been greatly influenced by Greek culture, probably while living outside Palestine. The Hebrews were Jewish Christians who lived in their native Palestine. More seems to have been involved than language differences. The Aramaic-speaking Christians were more likely natives of Palestine and thus there widows would have been well known. Many devout Jews who lived outside of Palestine settled in their old age in Jerusalem so that they could be buried near the city. When their husband's died, few women were capable of supporting themselves. Thus they depended on benevolence of religious groups for survival.⁴⁹

There was a long tradition of the care for the poor in the synagogue. The early church continued that practice. Charles H. Talbert in his book, *Read Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary of Acts* provided a commentary on the Jewish society's view of widows and relief for the poor. He wrote:

In the Jewish society widows were viewed as particularly needy and dependent. The Old Testament singles them out, along with orphans, as primary objects of charity (Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 146:9). . . . Non Messianist Judaism had two types of poor relief. In the one, on Fridays three relief officers would give enough money from that collected from local residents to cover fourteen meals for the resident poor. In the other, three officers would go to various houses to collect food and drink to have available on a daily basis for poor stranger. The daily distribution in Acts does not correspond to either model. It

⁴⁹ French L. Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 65.

combines parts of both in a daily distribution to permanent residents as a general practice. It is implied that it is made out of the common funds provided by the voluntary contributions mentioned in 2:44-45 and 4:34-35.⁵⁰

In Acts 6:1-7, the problem was not the continuation of care for widows. The problem rested with a segment of the community feeling that they were not being treated equally in the distribution of the daily meals. The Greek-Speaking Jews felt that their widows were being neglected in the daily administration. The issue in the Christian community was not an increase in number, but a radical change in the makeup of the community. William Barclay in his commentary on Acts asserts that many of the Jews from foreign countries that became Christians had forgotten their Hebrew and spoke only Greek. "The natural sequence was that the spiritually snobbish Aramaic-speaking Jews looked down on the foreign Jews."⁵¹ Jews coming into the Christian community from other countries created a change in the setting of the Christian community. If nothing else, the method of communication had changed within the community. Perhaps that was the barrier that caused Greek-speaking Jews to be neglected in the daily administration.

The early church growth possibly would have come to rapid decline if this matter with the Greek-speaking Jews had not been addressed. Robert C. Tannehill said it well when he said, "The early church had problems but, according to Acts, it also had leaders who moved swiftly to ward off corruption and find solutions to internal conflicts, supported by people who listened to each other with open minds and responded with good

⁵⁰ Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 73-74.

⁵¹ William Barclay, *Acts of the Apostles* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 52.

will.”⁵² The apostles had to change the way daily distribution was being administered to meet change that had occurred within the Christian community.

In resolving the problem, the apostles included the people of the community to help find a solution to the problem. This suggests that a church within a changing community must involve the community in order to properly address the need created by the change. It is recorded in Acts 6:2-4, “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said. It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” The entire community was involved in addressing the need of the changing community. “All of the seven who were chosen had Greek names and were undoubtedly from the Greek-speaking believers.”⁵³ This illustrates that to meet the needs of a changing community the rural church must place people in position with gifts to meet those needs. Placing the Hebrew-speaking believers to administer to the needs of the Greek-speaking believers would not have properly addressed the problem.

By the early church being willing to change its structure to meet the needs of the changed that had taken place within its community, the church continued to grow rapidly. Acts 6:5-7 says,

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose
Stephen, a man full of faith and of Holy Ghost, and Phillip, and

⁵² Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unit of Luke-Acts A Literary Interpretation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 81.

⁵³ Stanley M. Morgan, ed., *The Complete Biblical Library* (Springfield, MO: R.R. Donnelly and Sons, 1987), 137.

Prochorus, and Nicanor and Timon, and Parmenas, Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch. Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priest were obedient to the faith.

Theological Foundation

The Rural Church

Kent Hunter defines rural church as “a congregation of Christian people who live an agriculturally-oriented lifestyle.” In actuality, rather than a rural church, there are churches in rural communities. There is a growing realization that the rural church needs to become more local if it is to survive. According to Bernard Evans, its survival will depend in large measure upon how church is understood. He writes: “If by church we mean a community of believers, there is every reason to expect that the rural churches will be with us for a very long time. If, on the other hand we view churches as institutions within the local community, the question of their survival in the rural communities is less certain . . .”

Rural communities tend to be small and built on cooperation. According to Shannon Jung, “given the pressures on small communities from the outside world, congregations that squander precious resources on simply keeping a building open, instead of pooling resources, are sinful.” The reality might well be that rural poverty will eventually force churches to work together to survive. It is now recognized that the days are gone where everyone was assumed to be a Christian and church member. Yet this assumption lives on in the “status quo,” making new initiatives very difficult, if not impossible.

The term “status quo” is a cultural term setting out the social position, rank, and relative importance of some to others. There is indeed a “pecking” order within rural culture. There is a sense that some church leaders not only accept that the status quo does exist, but that it has somehow to be appeased—unless a short pastorate is desired!

The Bible does not allow for a status quo ministry because we are either going backwards or forwards. Therefore a new look at rural ministry is called for, to take a more “Apostolic” approach. Thus this clarion call to action in rural ministry—to call together those willing to count the cost and to do the work necessary for the Kingdom of God to advance in rural areas.

Bob Beckett states “a much more frightening prospect (than making mistakes) is the status quo, especially when we realize people in our communities are lost in transition every day of the week because they are caught in tradition.” Do we believe this? How enthusiastic are we for Jesus and His Kingdom to be established in our part of His Vineyard? Rural pastors need to become rooted, with a sense of responsibility to care for the place where they are and to live in fellowship with Christians who are committed to being part of a covenanted community. Where better to understand the issues of living in community and to model “communities of hope” than in rural churches, where people are already intermingled in wide-spread family and social relationships, but which need development in a Christian context.

Church Community

Robert Banks comments that “in many places there is a trend towards building homogenous congregations rather than diverse ones.” But God really delights in diversity which is a fact of rural community because of the limited human resources. In a small

town or village people from many diverse church backgrounds are present, are in relationships of some sort, and are beginning to see the need to stand and work together—even praying together—for the very life of their school and community, if not their churches. The need is to seek the common ground. This on-going struggle to bring opposites together is both painful and joyous. It is the ministry of Jesus moving people toward change consistent with the presence of the Kingdom. Bringing all these folks together in order to build a kind of Kingdom community requires a strong scriptural and theological foundation.

Theology as Local and Rooted in Community

The traditional concept of theology as an unshakable, foundational understanding rooted in scripture, of who God is, and what He has done in history for each of us, needs to be lived out in the uniqueness of the local situation. This local theology cannot be created apart from immersion in the local community by the pastor, who needs to be not only a theologian but also prophet and poet in the theological process. Theology is thus done for the sake of the community and is a vital part of rural ministry.

Rural pastors should not set up their own idea of worship and progress, expecting to draw an eclectic group attracted to what they are doing, as the population base for that is not a reality. Inherited theologies do not fit well into experiences in rural ministry, which is forcing a new look at theology in order to make it more sensitive to context, procedure and history.

Robert Banks defines theology as “any endeavor on the part of Christians to think through and set in order their beliefs, with the intention of drawing closer to God and reflecting more His character in their lives.” This definition moves into the realm of

spirituality and into the process of sanctification; how we live out our faith in our ordinary everyday lives.

The purpose of God for an individual church must be sought out by involving the entire church community. This is especially true in a rural situation where the staunchly independent people must be perceived as involved and consulted before they will participate in an event or support any kind of change.

Thus the concept of praxis needs to be understood and entered into by every rural pastor if effective leadership is to be given. In essence, praxis is the process whereby as we meditate theologically about practical everyday events, we see their purpose reflected back to us. Truth is thus discovered through an action whose ultimate purpose and value becomes part of the action. For example, the pastor is responsible to do the “stuff” of ministry—prayer, pastoral visiting, rites of passage, leading worship, community involvements—all the while seeking to discover the unique gifts of individuals and the corporate regenerative gift of the congregation.

Encouragement to exercise this discovered gift then becomes a goal to aim for as the day by day pastoral activities are done. Praxis describes how rural community works. Someone expresses a need and if this is received by a majority, things will almost miraculously begin to happen. Praxis requires that only in the process of the action are certain truths discovered concerning the final purpose and goal, which means we do not pre-determine our goal and agenda.

The task of theological discernment thus belongs to those who experience the praxis of the Spirit in the context of ministry—in the context of a specific community and its culture. Thus theology as praxis is geared toward transformation. We need more praxis than practice. We need to include effects of the Word as well as a presentation of it. We

need more than an academic theology because formal education does not impress rural folk.

If theology is what we believe about God, then spirituality is how we live out that belief. Eric Dale offers this definition: “Spirituality is that striving for the transforming power present in life.” Thus Christian spirituality presupposes a way of life and to be a Christian is to live in a certain way. We also need to remember that Christianity won the day over the Roman Empire because it was not merely a doctrinal religion, but a religion of power.

The gift and operation of the Holy Spirit within each believer makes Christian spirituality different than any other. Salvation is not just an event that occurs when we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ but is an on-going, life-long pilgrimage. Spirituality is thus the way we see the world, our relationships with other people, with God, and with material things. It concerns lifestyle, values and a way of life. In a day of counterfeit spirituality, it is absolutely vital that Christians stand true to Biblical teaching and that their relationship to Jesus Christ is seen as living, vibrant and attractive in both character and daily life.

The search for spirituality is in essence a call to a transformed daily life where faith and everyday life become integrated. It is a journey of discovery. It is important to establish the realization that God wants us to walk in the Spirit daily and to grow spiritually over our whole lifetime.

Francis de Sales wisely counseled not to expect transformation in a moment even though it be possible for God to give it. The Christian pilgrimage takes us into the Kingdom of God through a transformed life—through the transformation of the heart.

Entering this spiritual reality ought to become the primary desire of our heart on which we focus our time, energy, and resources. Growth into God—the experience of His peace, love, and fullness of His joy—requires passion, courage, persistence, patience, time, and self-discipline because no one drifts casually into vital spirituality.

Surely in the beauty of nature, in the rhythm of seedtime and harvest, in the quieter pace of life, there ought to be enhanced opportunity to discover God. Christians in a rural church, therefore, are in an opportune place to reach out and draw in those who are seeking, helping them to meet the living God for themselves.

Just as the burning bush commissioned Moses to initiate the redemption of his people, so in the baptism by John, Jesus was anointed with the power of the Spirit to fulfill God's messianic promise. It is the burning bush that is our theological starting point.

Jesus promised His disciples that they would be “baptized with the Holy Spirit” and would receive power to be his witnesses, and then He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:5-9). He promises that our Father in Heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13). Therefore, if the world is to have a vision of Jesus Christ in its blindness to God, it must look into the face of those who have the Spirit of Christ.

Without Pentecost as the beginning, the church becomes the incarnation of a human ideal rather than the continuing mission of the incarnate Jesus Christ. The Spirit will not permit us to rest in a church of doctrinal formulations even as Shannon Jung points out: “Theology and pastoral care training are helpful, but in the end, it is the Holy Spirit who works the miracles.” We need “to pray that God's Spirit will blow through our imaginations.”

We need to break out of the wineskins of the conventional and create whole new ways to seek first the Kingdom of God in our lives and in our mission.” The foundations

of “what is” have to be shattered and the new reinstituted. Innovators are needed who will take a stab at a new way and who are given the freedom to fail.

Hopefully, people in traditional churches might begin to see that the most important asset to have in these days is pioneers who are willing to break new trails. We need Spirit-empowered leaders; spiritual invaders living in community. The promise and expectation which led to the Pentecost event was in the context of a community of ministry, not personal edification as an end in itself. It was for the purpose of being witnesses (Acts 1:8). Pentecost is not simply a once and for all baptism of the Spirit, but life in fellowship and community. It is living the Sermon on the Mount.

If we are inwardly transformed we will live the principles outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. If we get our lives in line with God’s principles, good fruit will be produced. Basic to the teaching of Dallas Willard is the sense that a person who will trust Jesus should be able to live the lifestyle illustrated by the Sermon on the Mount—a lifestyle increasingly free of the deepest roots of human wrong-doing. That is, a life increasingly free from contempt and anger (Matthew 5:21-26); from domination by sexual lust and disgust (Matthew 5:27-32); and from any desire to dominate and control verbally (Matthew 5:33-37).

As these basic roots are dealt with we will also be enabled to live increasingly free from grudges (Matthew 5:38-42), and be able to love enemies and bless those who curse us (Matthew 5:43-48). As we live this life of the Spirit, character becomes embodied in us and lived out in the “everyday” events of life. These Beatitudes speak directly against what our culture perceives as “success.” They speak forth an uncomfortable challenge to most of us. To preach this kind of message, pastors need to walk in that place of humble servant leadership along with the full authority they have in their person and position.

Leadership

Rural pastors face the reality of being involved in close and intense relational dynamics on a daily and on-going basis. Like the rest of the community, they are known intimately; but unlike the rest of the community, certain expectations are placed on them. According to Kathleen Norris, professionals trying to make it in small rural towns—especially ministers—make an easy target. She notes: “They set themselves up for attack simply by doing their job.” Shannon Jung notes that anyone working for the church in rural areas needs “to be strong, if they are to avoid being chewed up. It is a constant balancing act—between caring and listening, functioning as a catalyst or charismatically, the role of a visionary and conflict resolver.” There is a built-in tension in rural ministry and potential rural pastors need to understand and consider the question of authority for authority and power sources have been in place for generations.

A look at Benedictine authority is helpful because of its purpose to unify the community and direct attention to God. Benedictine community leaders had an internal authority based on the gospel that prevented them from following all the winds of social change. They listened to the community, to the world, and to God. They were always on hand to bend hearts, change paths and open minds—their own included. The intent of authority was to call, enable, raise questions, and shape the community to the values of the Christian life.

In reality, (although often missed by rural people) the whole Christian community is to take on “a life-style, values and attitudes that are different from the society around” and not just the pastor. The dynamic force in a Benedictine community was the Holy Spirit, who created and sustained the community. Real authority does not come from a

piece of paper or an office, but from the incarnation of the spirit of loving service that is ratified and celebrated by the community.

Disenchantment with Institutional Religion

A cursory review of various sources of literature reveals that people are reacting against a hierarchy of denominationalism. One person opines that “what God is doing right now is dismantling the denominational systems as fast as possible,” while David Watson wrote:

The old order of the established and organized church, relying on its structures and traditions instead of the renewing of the Spirit of God, will not do . . . everything depends on our ability to catch a new vision of the church as it ought to be, on our willingness to change where necessary, and above all on our determination to keep our lives continually open to spiritual renewal.

In rural areas focused denominational interests are becoming more and more a hindrance to the furtherance of the Kingdom. Structure has become a power system that is larger and more powerful than the people. Mead writes: “It is the kind of demonic power that Saint Paul warns against when he talks about ‘principalities and powers’” (Ephesians 6:12). Good can become demonic when the system takes power and authority unto itself, away from the church it is intended to serve. The church of the future must break this power. Loren Mead opines that there is “a call to something genuinely new. . . our task is no less than the reinvention of the church.”

Amidst the chaos and confusion of our day, rural churches are in a unique position to develop new forms of ministry and clergy-laity relationships. The principle of the priesthood-of-all-believers needs to be applied and the Holy Spirit allowed to work

amongst the people with transforming power. This kind of change requires risk—not only for the pastors but also the community itself—for change from what has always been is seen as threatening. Someone has to begin; someone has to be the pioneer-prophet moving into the experience at a personal level and then calling back to the community to follow.

Church leaders need to ask the crucial question of how to support the pastor-leader as pioneer. Perhaps the denomination needs to be reborn? God is doing a new thing in ministry these days; there is a new paradigm being shaped—a new church is being born. The shape of this new church cannot be planned for or controlled. We can only act, trusting in God's presence in it. According to Shannon Jung, the emerging paradigm is one that "is much more compatible with the rural congregation's affinity for lay leadership and also local mission."

Because of the non-homogeneous character of rural ministry, the Word must be central and Jesus Christ proclaimed and lifted up. The need is for a deep sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in worship. It must be sensitive to the musical resources and needs of any particular congregation. In this area, pastoral leadership is crucial in creating the right environment for the creation of a common vision of God's desire. The need is to pray for an impartation of the spirit of prayer in order to break through obstacles.

One area of strength that the rural church does have is that of a sense of community and relationship with each other. Rural folk have a commitment to the land—their place—and hence there is a certain stability. Traditional structures however can be very limiting in what can be done quickly as opportunities open up. There is need for new wine skins in rural ministry—new structures that will be Kingdom oriented—with leaders raised up locally. There is no reason why rural churches cannot experience revival with signs and wonders, conversions and changed hearts and lives.

Spiritual gifting needs to be identified. People can be equipped. This paradigm shift is occurring where “the Holy Spirit becomes for the believing community more the environment in which it lives than an object of its consciousness.” To arrive at this point, risk is involved in entering into new relationships that are self-examining, mutually supportive and risk-taking. If this is to happen it means that rural pastors have to respond to a definite call and sense of vocation; have to embrace the Cross and be able to balance the prophetic ministry with the pastoral ministry of priest and servant leader.

Pastoral Call

Rural ministry is summed up rather well by one pastor as follows: “Being a rural pastor means being able to see and understand the sense of community behind a lot of hidden pain and feelings of loneliness.” Ministry is a calling—never a career. Call has therefore a sense of ought-ness. It is bigger than us. It is a call to accomplish something we could never imagine doing or fulfilling with our own resources. It is full of hope. Jesus told His disciples: “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21).

The disciples proclaimed the truth in word and demonstrated it in deed, doing the same kinds of works which Jesus had done: the lame walked, the dead were raised, and the gospel was preached to the poor. Ministry is founded, grounded, and defined by the prior ministry of Jesus, who went about preaching and teaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Thus we cannot view a place as a stop-gap stepping stone to another ministry into “greener pastures” but need to existentially enter into and work where we are.

Servant Leadership

Jesus renounced the use of worldly power as a demonic temptation and chose instead the way of the “suffering servant” and the Cross. We need to understand that the needs of the world did not set the agenda for His ministry. Pastors need to grasp this concept of being a servant, doing only that which they see the Father doing. This, of course, will mean a closer walk with the Lord and a deep experience of knowing Him. This was the basis of Jesus’ ministry. His model of ministry teaches that servanthood comes out of the security of knowing that we are God’s children—a security that sets us free to be servants.

By being so secure in the Lord, a servant leader will never need to manipulate the people into accepting his own agenda, but will prepare them to receive and experience the presence of the Lord in their midst. This is the foundation for a healing community.

Folk culture is that of people in a local area built and developed upon lived experience over generations. Values and practices become so ingrained that they are as “religious” beliefs, not open to question! It is a very common deep-seated stronghold in rural communities. Shannon Jung, quoting Anthony Pappas, likens the rural value system to folk societies of developing nations, citing certain similar characteristics such as: the traditional maintenance of the status quo; life roles; the land as a powerful factor; experience and time perceived as cyclical; little value placed on self-analysis.

Many rural communities are interested in preservation rather than transformation, and the goal of the small church is often one of maintenance, not transformation; preservation, not change, which in itself is often seen as disruptive and harmful.

Closely related to folk culture is community spirit. In small rural centers, “community” is a concept close to the heart of the people. The rural understanding of community however, is often a “counterfeit” overriding scriptural understandings and principles of life. C. S. Lewis writes of a false and exclusive community that divides instead of unifies: “some people are obviously in, and some are obviously out.” He points to the sense of terror that some feel in being left out of the inner ring. Pressure from this “community spirit” to belong can lead to compromise and a loss of integrity by caving-in to something objectionable just to avoid conflict.

In any small rural village, this “community spirit” exists and newcomers soon encounter it as they begin to discover that they are outsiders. For true community (which is all-inclusive) to flourish, congregations must be willing to acknowledge and dismantle the “good community spirit” which over-rides concern for truth and calls for peace at any price. To not do so is to be absorbed into it and destroyed by it. John Dawson notes: “What God is looking for in us is an abandonment to His purpose without reservation; a people willing to pay the price for true rather than counterfeit reconciliation. Cheap reconciliation papers over deep-seated differences by suggesting that we can have peace with God, by pretending offenses did not happen or that injustice cannot be addressed.”

In dealing with folk culture and community spirit, pastors first need to accept the reality that a “community spirit” exists, that it is extremely powerful, and that its mode of operation needs to be identified.

The majority of rural congregations fear change and conflict, and avoid both at all costs. This is because controversy might alienate neighbors who are in frequent face-to-face contact. According to sociologist Alex Sims, “avoidance becomes a high price to pay to maintain peace in a rural neighborhood or even to keep a small church from falling

apart.” For Kevin Ruffcorn, unresolved issues “lie buried just below the surface of everyday congregational life.”

These hidden issues and disruptions in congregational life become grounds for “enemy” activity and over time a stronghold develops. Pastors who are called to a rural church need to understand that they may well be dealing with hearts wounded for a long time. It is necessary to create openness to conflict and controversy, where the causes of pain, resentment, and anger can be confronted. A pastor needs to stand firm against the inroads the enemy has made, recognizing there will be pain to bear. Paul put it this way: “For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you” (2 Corinthians 2:4).

A large percentage of rural communities have Masonic connections at the very roots of their development. Because of Freemasonry beliefs, the way is open for new-age thinking and a resultant dilution of the gospel and a syncretistic kind of worship. Anglican priest and founder of “The Joshua Connection”, Alistair Petrie, notes on tape that Freemasonry is “A Trojan Horse in the Church,” with those involved purporting to uphold the tenets of Christian faith, unaware that masonry is the antithesis of it. When Freemasonry has a foothold, church and community experiences a sense of restriction and repression. The good news is that when the stronghold is broken, people or churches can become a catalyst for redeeming a community.

Pastors in rural ministry are often wounded. In many situations these wounds have not had a chance to heal. They have been neglected, denied, or constantly reopened. These open and sometimes infected wounds have affected pastoral ministry. They have weakened the ability of pastors to minister and have clouded the visions of ministry and evangelism.

Truly, God's purpose is to heal and establish relationships locally. Building healthy relationships is fundamental to a church community. Pastors are central to the process, and in order to get to a place where the love and compassion of Jesus can flow freely—thus helping hurting people—they need to allow God to deal with their own hearts first.

The love and compassion of Jesus can only flow from “wounded healers” whose brokenness is being transformed and whose willingness to be vulnerable is evident. For all of us (whenever there has been abuse, pain, brokenness), recovery is not easy nor is it an immediate experience. Emotional calluses form to cover the results of emotional trauma in order to allow a person to function. This is very deceptive because the pain is no longer felt. A tendency to believe that the hurt has been healed can easily develop. But behind all psychological pain and brokenness, there is a spiritual wound that can only be healed by the love and grace of God as expressed by the work of the Holy Spirit to set us free.

A community of God's people together seeking to follow Him can provide a safe environment within which a painful past can be revealed. New life is born out of the pains of the past, and the more we are able to “come to the painful confession of our loneliness, hostilities and illusions, the more we are able to see solitude, hospitality and prayer as part of the vision of our life.” The real “experts” of rural ministry are pastors who experience the “joy and the sorrow, the pain and the tears of the rural people.” There is no “quick fix.”

Time, persistence, and a consistent proclaiming of the Word of God to effect change are required to overcome the many fears confronting rural congregations. Saturating our minds in the truth of God's unconditional love and giving it out will do more to create a healing environment than anything else we may do. As we learn to

receive and give unconditional love, we experience true unity of the Spirit and the church becomes a “healing center for the wounded.”

A pastor needs to identify with the people and pray with and for them. This is why George Otis Jr. points out the need for “remaining accountable, maintaining a devotional life and recruiting prayer support.” Establishing and maintaining a devotional life is absolutely essential to being able to engage in spiritual battle and to minister effectively. The concept of praxis is at work here, for pastors need to have spiritual disciplines in their lives to be prepared for spiritual warfare.

As they become experienced and see the fruit of this work, enemy opposition will increase, as will the need for applying spiritual disciplines. Thus spiritual warfare and spiritual disciplines go hand in hand.

Spiritual disciplines are vehicles to help connect us to the power of the Holy Spirit so that we might be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. There is an agricultural metaphor that speaks clearly to the matter. John writes, “a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies, but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest” (John 12:25, NEB). In the case of a grain of wheat, farmers are very familiar with how the ground takes in heat, energy and moisture and, extending its roots, finds further nourishment in the soil around it. This transforms the seed. Similarly, people are transformed by contact with God who is all around and within them, when they cooperatively interact with God.

It must be pointed out that human inner transformation, like that of the grain, is a lengthy process and does not come easily. Discouragement can hinder the practicing of such things as prayer and the daily reading of the Word, and is one of the weapons that Satan uses to keep pastors and congregations from bringing spiritual discipline into their

lives. Indeed, the prince of this world has done a good job of trying to keep people from the benefits of spiritual discipline.

Even the word discipline has a negative, oppressive connotation for people in North America, where the individual's rights and freedoms have taken precedence over any sense of duty, responsibility, or accountability.

Christian grace and freedom has for many become tolerance, and opposition to the active pursuit of spiritual disciplines comes from those who see grace in opposition to effort. Furthermore, a culture given over to self-fulfillment, self-realization, and self-sufficiency has infected the church. In stark contrast to all the attention to self, Frederick Buechner writes: "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you a high and driving peace. I will condemn you to death." This process of self-denial or dying to self as scripture defines it, is at the core of living out the Christian life. Dying to self indicates a process of pain and suffering which is a truth difficult for us to embrace.

The process of allowing God to deal with the heart (which is deceitful above all things) is personal, lonely, and full of uncertainty, loss, confusion and bleakness. It is a movement away from knowing, to a direction so unclear that it is frightening. It is the process of learning how to lean into fear as we encounter what Janet Hagberg describes as "The Wall."

Spiritual disciplines aid this process and yet they are not seen as important for many people who want to carry on life as is, without any change to their lifestyle. In a society driven and trapped by busyness, it is difficult to make room for spiritual discipline and being led by the Holy Spirit with meaningful responses instead of being pressed by circumstances and stresses into certain reactions. Affluence and ease of travel mean many

people venture beyond the local community for work, church, sports, shopping and entertainment.

People are living busy lives and rush from one activity to another. In actual fact, spiritual disciplines are for busy people—to help establish priorities and discover what must be pruned away in order to draw closer to God. The practice of spiritual disciplines leads to an increased spontaneity in being able to do what needs to be done when it is needed. They will help us to be led by the Holy Spirit with meaningful responses instead of being pressed by circumstances and stressed into certain reactions.

Jesus said: “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower?” Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish” (Luke 14:28-30).

John Calvin wrote in his Institutes that “whomever the Lord has adopted and deemed worthy of His fellowship ought to prepare himself or herself for a hard, toilsome, and unquiet life, crammed with very many and various kinds of evil.” Richard Foster writes of difficulties and a transformation of the spirit as “God moves from the periphery of our prayer experience to the center.” During this process we feel despairing, dry, even lost.

We experience God as a great void, but in the midst of it all we learn how to trust Him. As we are brought to a halt, God is better able to work His inner transformation within us. John of the Cross uses the term “dark night of the soul” to describe this experience—and it is painful as we feel forsaken and forgotten by God—abandoned perhaps. It is an inner anguish and disorientation. It is a stripping of our comfortable

illusions and false securities. It is simply trusting, which makes us realize the vanity of the world around us. It also makes us long for the peace that passes all understanding.

This upsetting of our inner life makes us very vulnerable, but it is essential to spiritual growth. In fact, Elizabeth Dreyer writes that “Jesus’ witness challenges us to choose to become vulnerable, to move through the dark night into conversion and new life [which is what lies at the] heart of the Christian faith.”

We need to trust that God will indeed “complete that which he has begun,” and that His work, His discipline, and His guidance are for good. This kind of trust helps give us courage to enter into the painful process of transformation of the soul even as the writer to the Hebrews makes note of: “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11).

The early church recognized that a person’s life of faith was based on the pre-eminence of liturgy, the spiritual exegesis of scripture, and the leisurely reading of sacred texts. Prayer, meditation on scripture, contemplation (sitting silently before God), and other spiritual disciplines played a definite role together with such spiritual disciplines as solitude, silence, fasting, secrecy, study, worship, celebration, service, fellowship, confession and submission. In rural life, many opportunities avail themselves to put these disciplines into place.

In some respects, service comes naturally to rural dwellers as they are called upon for help by their community. Those in the farming community have tended to be rather dependent on each neighbor, stopping work to give a hand when needed. This quality still remains in the hearts of most rural folk. Spiritual disciplines can bring depth and focus to this heart to serve.

We need to become servants after the style and order of Jesus who “taking the very nature of a servant . . . humbled himself and became obedient to death” (Philippians 2:5-11). Engaging in service means to turn away from our position and status. It is to do things in secret where we will not be recognized. Thus practicing the discipline of secrecy will allow us to be content without any human approval “so that our giving may be in secret” (Matthew 6:4).

Jeremy Taylor advises to “nurture a love to do good things in secret, concealed from the eyes of others, and therefore not highly esteemed because of them. Be content to go without praise, never being troubled when someone has slighted or undervalued you.”

What secrecy does is to allow us to place our public relations into the hands of God allowing Him to decide when our deeds will become known and when our light is to be noticed. As Christians, we are all gifted for service in some form. Peter writes “each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10). While Paul points out that there are “different kinds of service, but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:5). Our motivation to serve is love (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 John 4:19).

Fellowship means to be with others in common enterprises such as worship, learning and service. It is to know Christ in others without regard to their human “qualifications” and to be received on the same basis. It is to allow for the realization of a joyous and sustained life in Christ that is normally impossible to attain by our individual effort. The Christian journey is basically a shared one where as members of the Body of Christ we become agents of the Holy Spirit in one another’s growth and transformation.

Bonhoeffer wrote that “Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession of its members for one another, or it collapses.” Primary to this kind of fellowship is the

discipline of confession where we allow ourselves to be known in our failures. It enables us to drop the burden of pretense and to be truly humbled before God and man. It is goodbye to pride and relief from hypocrisy. Essentially, it is entire transparency. Oswald Chambers says that repentance is “the bedrock of Christianity.” Through self-examination, we can become more aware of our true state before God. “Search me, O God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23, 24).

Getting right with God opens the floodgate for God’s mercy to come into an individual and a community and for the power of the Holy Spirit to be released. Through confession, that which has been kept festering in the dark is brought out into the light and, being made visible, loses its power, no longer being able to tear a fellowship apart.

Dallas Willard notes that “confession alone makes deep fellowship possible, and the lack of it explains much of the superficial quality commonly found in our church associations.” While repentance and confession open the door, yielding and submission are the ingredients necessary for surrender into the fullness of the heart of God. As we surrender to God we give ourselves over to Him. We give up all our self-control. We lose our selves in Him.

Submission frees us from the burden of having our own way and being all wise. It permits us to benefit from counsel (Proverbs 11:14, 12:15, 20:5 & 18) and is the missing element in a society that no longer believes in wisdom but technique and therapy. Dallas Willard states: “The highest level of fellowship—involving humility, complete honesty, transparency, and at times confession and restitution—is sustained by the discipline of submission.”

You would think that the church community would be leading the way in this, but bringing any sense of mutual submission into the rural churches appears to be problematic at this point. Divisions among Christians abound. However, it is entirely possible that given the right leadership, divisions can be healed and churches united in the spirit of freedom that we have in Christ. This might mean letting go of one's denominational loyalty for the community good. The Holy Spirit of God has a plan for the uniting of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Applying spiritual disciplines (which open us to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit) will build our personal strength and perseverance. As we grow in fellowship, and draw in others, extended community will grow and thrive. For this to occur we need to spend time with one another. It is for this reason that Sabbath keeping is a fundamental precept and discipline for building community.

Capturing The Vision

Ray Simpson wrote that “the ground is so hard, and the people so pagan, that perhaps nothing less than a community of love in action will suffice to transplant the Body—the Life—of Christ.” The prevailing historical Judeo-Christian cultural construct is collapsing and people on the whole have lost any sense of rootedness, as western culture changes dramatically, taking rural culture along with it.

The foundations that gave us “Christendom” are breaking apart. Some people are still caught in the secularism and materialism that has been so rampant. They are spiritually hardened, and often disillusioned with “church.” Other streams of people are turning from secularism to any and every type of spirituality. According to Ray Simpson, “the modern

church seems unable to adapt to meet modern concerns of ecology, love of the earth and changing lifestyles with its resurgence of desire for true community.”

There is a need for clarity and focus. This does not come easily, as we are so bound by the paradigm of church structures that we know, as well as by the pragmatism and organization of our culture. Christian leaders get caught in moving on with programs and “how-to’s” to prop up what is; rather than stopping, reflecting, and seeing that which God is doing.

Over the centuries, congregations have been part of the social glue of community life—anchors, stable places holding up a transcendent vision of the meaning of life. Today, however, churches are closing and with them the hope that keeps a community morally and spiritually alive.

The closing of each place of worship simply adds to the spiritual and moral demise of an area. This author believes that out of the culture of the post-industrial era a new rural and Christian community could arise, from which a new authentic rural culture could be regenerated. This then is the call—to return to a model of apostolic times when the church formed strong local entities that nurtured the people to reach out to a hostile environment.

The challenge is to find an appropriate way of communicating “the Gospel” to this new culture—even as it forms. And so the future mission of the rural church is “stretched between a great vision of the past and a new vision not yet fully formed.”

Conclusion

We have identified—and are likely only too aware on a daily basis—the rapid change and cultural upheaval in which we live today. The current postmodern times—with

the loss of Christian foundations and morality, loss of respect for authority at all levels, stress and strife from high-pressured work situations and lifestyle expectations—are encroaching upon even the isolated rural village.

The church is caught up in the changing times, wanting to hold onto denominational distinctiveness yet having to let go in order to attract newcomers. The financial crisis—often first felt in rural areas—may have a positive aspect in providing an opportunity for something new and creative to develop.

Richard Foster reminds us of the real world in which we live and minister, when he writes that his friend was “the pastor of a small congregation that is a microcosm of all the sin and hurt of the modern world.” Greg Ogden sums up the situation when he writes: “We live in a casualty society. People are weighed down by the baggage of guilt from abortions, the wreckage of divorce, and the after-effects of alcoholism and substance abuse. The more we can enter into the pain of people’s lives, the more we win the right to share the gospel. To be kingdom people penetrating society means that we enter the spiritual battle against the forces of darkness that oppress and do violence to people’s lives.”

This statement highlights the need for spiritual warfare by pastors on their own behalf and for the congregation, with all the involvements of a rural situation. To be effective is to enter into spiritual disciplines, which need to be restored to a right place in the Christian world. Doing this will help overcome the present chasm between faith and daily living—we need to foster the awareness of, and response to, our living Lord in all aspects of life. Emerging from all of the foregoing is the need to develop Christian community as an ark, with recognizable elements, standards and Biblical viewpoint of life.

Christians living in a rural setting experience God and live out their faith and spirituality in a unique way, and because of this they have the potential to create transformed Christian communities which by their very “being” and active witness would be signs of hope and repositories of truth and righteous living in an increasingly darkening world.

God called Noah to build an ark, and when he obeyed, God preserved his family and repopulated the earth. Noah withstood the pressure of society in creating something new, doing something different in carrying on with his work, all the while trying to warn the people to prepare.

When God closed the door on the ark, Noah and his family were spared and used mightily by God to accomplish His purposes. In all the distress and turmoil in the church and society of our day, and in the process of learning to live in Christian community for the purpose of developing an “ark,” we need to “keep looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2a).

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Setting

The participants in this study were 54 members (29 females and 25 males) who are all active members of Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia. The term active member for the purpose of this study implies that one attends church regularly 2/4 Sundays per month and, in addition, makes regular financial contributions to the church. The participants' ages ranged between 18 and 80. Participants were recruited through church school classes: young adult ministry, men's and women's bible study. The surveys were distributed during the latter half of the class. There were a total of 108 persons in Sunday school on the dates the surveys were administered. Therefore, this survey reflects 50 percent of the Church school population.

Measures and Procedures

In a group setting, the participants completed an assessment packet that included a battery of pencil and paper questionnaires. The packet included demographic items and two questionnaires. The scale items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each survey consisted of 10 questions. The score was derived by summing the responses (1 point each) for each of the 10 items, yielding a summary score that ranged between 0 and 10. The pre & post surveys were

given three weeks apart from one another. During the three-week interval, sermons were given from the book of Nehemiah and 1 Corinthians. Workshops were also given entitled “Church Makes the Difference in the Community” and “The Value of the Church.”

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Proverbs 29:18 reads “Where there is no vision the people perish.” It is the contention of this writer that the vision for church growth is consistent with sound biblical doctrine. Moreover, it is the underlying assumption that the people at Canaan Baptist Church do not fully comprehend the concept of kingdom building. Kingdom building is fundamental and not supplemental. In fact, if the church fails to change within the community, the church eventually will fail to meet the needs of its people. Therefore this model attempted to provide in-depth biblical instructions regarding kingdom building in hopes of motivating the church to embrace change. If the Canaan Baptist Church were to release the clutches of its rural tradition it could become a progressive ministry (a ministry that meets the needs of its people). Moreover, the hypothesis asserts that preaching with an emphasis on change would motivate Canaan Baptist Church to transform itself to a church that meets the internal needs of its community. The text utilized for this didactic exercise derived from the books of Nehemiah and 1 Corinthians.

Pre-Evaluation Survey

The Likert Scale was used to measure the group’s level of awareness. **Question number one** was used to measure if the group felt that the community was growing. The responses were 1.9% strongly disagreed, 3.7 %disagreed, 33.3 agreed and 61.1% strongly

agreed. **Question number two** was used to measure if the group supported church involvement in community growth. The response were astounding 1.9% strongly disagreed, 3.7% disagreed, 37% agreed and 57.4% strongly agreed. **Question number three** was used to measure the group's belief that the church 's involvement in community change would increase church growth. The responses were 11.1% disagreed, 40.7% agreed and 48.1% strongly agreed. **Question number four** was used to measure the group's response for the need of a partnership between community leaders and the church. The responses were 9.3% disagreed, 35.2% agreed and 56.6% strongly agreed. **Question number five** was used to measure the group's understanding of the vision for Canaan Baptist Church. The responses were 7.4% strongly disagreed, 7.4% disagreed, 53.7% agreed and 31.5% strongly agreed. **Question number six** was used to measure the group's response to the direct question: "should the church and community have involvement with one another?" The responses were 48.1% strongly disagreed, 44.4% disagreed, 3.7% agreed and 3.7% strongly agreed. **Question number seven** was used to measure the group's response to the church starting an outreach program. The responses were 5.6% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed, 48.1% agreed and 35.2% strongly agreed. **Question number eight** was used to measure the group's belief of the value clear communication of God's vision in unifying efforts. The responses were 1.9 strongly disagreed, 7.4% disagreed, 51.9% agreed and 38.9% strongly agreed. **Question number nine** was used measure the group's belief that community changes over a five year period would significantly impact the church. The responses were 1.9% strongly disagreed, 5.6% disagreed, 68.5% agreed and 24.1% strongly agreed. **Question number ten** was used to measure the group's understanding of the biblical foundation concerning community

restoration. The responses were 9.3% disagreed, 55.6% agreed and 35.2% strongly agreed.

Post-Evaluation Survey

Question number one responses were 1.9% disagreed, 29.6% agreed and 68.5% strongly agreed. These results reveal an 8% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number two responses were 1.9% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed, 44.4% agreed and 42.6% strongly agreed. These results are disturbing as they reveal 7.4% increase in disagree, 14.8% decrease in strongly agreed.

Question number three responses were 31.5% agreed and 68.5% strongly agreed. These results reveal 20.4% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number four responses were 5.6% disagreed, 35.2% agreed and 59.2% strongly agreed. These results reveal 2.6% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number five responses were 1.9% disagreed, 53.7% agreed and 44.4% strongly agreed. These results reveal 12.9% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number six responses were 1.9% disagreed, 55.6% agreed and 42.6% strongly agreed. These results reveal 38.9% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number seven responses were 5.6% disagreed, 37.0% agreed and 57.4% strongly disagreed. These results reveal 22.2% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number eight responses were 1.9% disagreed, 55.6% agreed and 42.6% strongly agreed. These results reveal 3.7% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number nine responses were 59.3% agreed and 40.4% strongly agreed. These results reveal 16.6% increase in strongly agreed.

Question number ten responses were 7.4% disagreed, 44.4% agreed and 48.1% strongly agreed. These results reveal 12.9% increase in strongly agreed.

Perhaps the most perplexing to this researcher is the results revealed in question number two. Question number two read, “should the church involve itself in community growth?” The post survey showed a 7.4% increase in disagreement. There was a decrease in the strongly agreed category as well. It was mentioned earlier in this work that rural is not necessarily a place, but a perception or mind-set. The researcher’s initial reaction was to attribute the increase in disagreement to the rural mind-set. The researcher expected a number of those polled to disagree with the idea of community involvement. However, the researcher hoped that tendency to disagree would decrease after the information had been given. Question number six was quite similar to that of question number two. Question six read, “the community and the church should not have any involvement with each other.” There was a 38.9% increase in the strongly agreed category. After careful review of the two questions, the researcher believed that one word (growth) skewed question number two in the wrong direction. The word “growth” gave the question a meaning not initially intended.

The researcher was interested in learning if there was a difference in response according to gender. Two graphs were developed utilizing ANOVA analysis. These results suggest that the information provided had a slightly impacted the females more than the males. The results suggest that females at this point are more likely to embrace growth within a changing community. There is not a significant difference in the total of females to males in this study (25/29). Males comprised 46.3% of those polled while females comprised 53.7%. The graphs reveal that at pre survey time, the males had 38.8% in agreement, while females had 40.2% in agreement. At post survey time, the males

showed 43.1% agreement while the females showed 45.4% agreement. From pre to post survey the difference for males was 4.3% increase in agreement and the difference for females were 5.2% increase in agreement. Yet the information had more of an impact on the women than the men. Women were more willing to embrace change. The researcher is not sure why. This may provide the basis for further research as to why the correlation was so great between the two groups. The writer is surprised by the results, as the females in the church seem to air their ambiguities and discontent more readily than the males. This information suggests that the writer needs to explore ways to reach the male population.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The project's intent is to present sound biblical doctrine to the church in order to motivate the church to embrace a changing community. The church has remained in its rural tradition, and the community has grown into a vibrant urban class community. The objective was to motivate this context into a progressive ministry (a ministry willing to meet the needs of a changing community). The methodology to test the hypothesis was a series of sermons and seminars that would help motivate the people to meet the internal needs of its community. Somehow, this writer thought that writing this chapter would signify the culmination of a great work. While this writer in no way desires to minimize the magnitude of this experience, this writer realizes the arduous task that lies before. Application is the matrix of any learning experience. This research suggests that there is much to follow. In fact, this chapter signifies the beginning of another a chapter, entitled "In Action." This writer is charged with the responsibility of putting together the successes and failures of this project in order to foster a vision that is supported by biblical doctrine, substantiated by prayer and subjugated by the divine powers of God. It is always easier to look reflectively and state that one could have done things differently. Yes, it is true the writer would have done things differently if he had it to do over. Yet, what matters most in this writer's mind is the experience. The results are: that there is a significant positive correlation between genders in the post survey. There were significant

main effects for the pretest group and age. If this writer could do one thing differently, it would be to change the writer's perspective of this work. If this writer had viewed this work as a ministry, this writer would have better utilized time. By viewing this work as a ministry, the writer would have realized that, like a ministry, this work requires dedication and devotion. This writer believes that at some point he may have been more dedicated to completing the task than he was to the mission of this research ministry. This writer has come to the realization that to view this ministry as a project negates the value of its outcome in addition to minimizing the divine opportunity of the experience. Because of the writers' perspective of project versus ministry, meeting each appointed deadline became the primary focus while the mission behind the ministry became almost secondary. This writer viewed this ministry as a project and was therefore more outcomes-oriented than mission-focused. This research was done in sections and it reads as such. This writer believes that this work lacks a certain flow that separates mediocrity from good and good from great. Thinking retrospectively, this writer would have utilized his time more efficiently. He would have surveyed a larger pre and posttest group. This may have required disseminating pre and posttest at multiple intervals until fifty percent minimum of the membership had been surveyed. The church's actual membership was 248 members, which reflects 21.74% of the church's total population. The writer would have announced the plans and purpose of the survey four weeks prior to the survey. The writer would have reminded the congregation weekly regarding the upcoming survey, sermons, and seminars prior to the date of the actual survey. The writer would have made provisions for those persons in the congregation who are unable to read or write. There are 10 known persons in the congregation who are unable to read or write. There may be others, as most persons under-report these situations. The writer would have taken the time to establish a

relationship with a model church in order to learn more about meeting the needs within a changing community. The writer would have created more inventive and didactic workshops utilizing principles and concepts discussed by Rick Warren, Randy Pope and Ken Hemphill. Yet, this writer is reminded that if he had done all the things that he regrets not having done, the research would have taken a different venue. This writer also acknowledges over-usage of the term growth. The focus is preaching and teaching for church growth within a changing community. This writer views change and growth as being analogous to one another. Growth is a byproduct of change. If growth has occurred, then a change has occurred. However, the interdependent relationship between growth and change may be a concept embraced only by this writer. In fact, if the writer was going to incorporate that assumption in this work then it should have been stated early in this work. To overlook the ambiguities conjured by substituting the word growth for change may have been detrimental to this work.

In order to rescue this work from being an exercise in futility, this writer is charged with making the information applicable. The results of this study at best suggest further study is warranted in this area. The results suggest that the pastor is not impacting the males in the ways necessary to accommodate a changing community. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the pastor try innovative ways in which to obtain meaningful dialogue with the males in the congregation. Male team building exercises would be a viable option. It is recommended that the pastor explore dividing the male congregation up into four equal groups. One group is responsible for identifying the problems in the community, the second group responsible problem exploring how the community problem effects the church, the third group is responsible for prioritizing the issues, and the fourth group responsible for identifying solutions for the problem and all

groups are responsible for analyzing the results. This exercise in no way appears foolproof. However, it will establish open dialogue between the males in the church as well as foster teamwork. The literature reviewed for this work asserts that the pastor must lead by example and therefore this writer would have sought out for opportunities for community involvement such as new homeowners association and political involvement such as increase presence at city council meetings.

This writer has noted a group movement within his congregation. Since the first of the year (2003), Canaan Baptist Church, Suffolk, Virginia increased its membership by thirty some persons. The author credits God for the increase as well as for the manifestation of this completed work. Matthew 6:33 states “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹ The author acknowledges inherent flaws within this work, the greatest one being time mismanagement. Yet this work symbolizes a roadway. This work or some portion thereof may serve as a catalyst within a changing ministry. Others may learn from its values and mistakes. In parting, the author highlights some lessons learned along this research journey. Lesson one declares that in order to receive the full benefits of (God’s blessings) the vision for each ministry must be God-centered. Lesson number two asserts that each ministry must be flexible. In a changing community the church must willingly reevaluate its mission in order to supply the needs of the community. Lesson number three endorses preaching and teaching as the main vehicle in fostering a mindset of change. Preaching was the source of social activism in the past; likewise, preaching is our source today. Dr. Samuel D. Proctor states: “Today’s preachers are required to define, to declare and

¹ Matthew 6:33

defend the gospel in the twenty-first century with the same relevance, zeal and commitment that Paul, Ambrose, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Richard Allen brought to their times.”

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable always abounding in the work of the lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain.”

APPENDIX A
SERMON ONE—ONE MAN'S COMPASSION

One Man's Compassion

“And it came to pass when I heard these words that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and failed and prayed before the God of heaven.”

I. Historical Setting

Nehemiah learns from Hanani that Jerusalem is now desolate. The walls of Jerusalem are broken and the gates have been destroyed by fire, thereby leaving Jerusalem wall-less and defense less. Nehemiah is saddened, but challenged by the news of the condition of Jerusalem. Nehemiah has great concern for the safety of people at Jerusalem. It's laid upon Nehemiah's heart to go and rebuild the city. Nehemiah petitions King Artaxerxes for permission to go to and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Chapters 1-7 provide an account of the physical restoration, while chapters 8-13 provides an account of the spiritual restoration of Jerusalem. Despite great opposition Nehemiah led the restoration at the city as well as its people.

The above text reveals the depths on Nehemiah's compassion. It is important to note here that Nehemiah was a cup bearer (personal press secretary and valet) to King Artaxerxes, monarch of Persia. Therefore, one could say that Nehemiah was a man of substance. He had a good life with all the comforts thereof. Yet the compassion he felt for his people at Jerusalem caused him to leave his comfort zone.

It is important to understand the meaning of compassion. Webster's II dictionary defines compassion: sympathetic concern for the suffering of another, together with the inclination to give aid or support or to show mercy.

Doctrinal Value—To show compassion is consistent with biblical doctrine. However, to tell compassion for the plight of another and do nothing is not consistent with biblical doctrine. Upon hearing the news, Nehemiah wept, fasted, prayed and sought permission to go and rebuild. Nehemiah's compassion served as a conduct for change.

Wisdom—(Greek, Sophia) sacred intelligence Nehemiah fasted and prayed for months. This was a time of confession (1:6-7) over deeds of his and intercession to God over the needs of his people (1:8-11). During this time, it became clear to Nehemiah what he must do, and he then asked permission to go to Jerusalem.

Knowledge—(Greek, Gnosis) Nehemiah was a builder, however it would take more than a builder to restore Jerusalem physically and spiritually. Nehemiah under the auspices of theocratic spirit directed the completion of the wall in fifty-two days.

Faith—Being the substance of things hoped. The restoration project at Jerusalem was met with great opposition. Nehemiah's faith is revealed (6:9). I now therefore, O God strengthen my hands.

Nehemiah's compassion for his people is undisputed, yet crucial to this story and many others. This Biblical story is the essence of the meaning of compassion. Compassion as defined by Webster's II: sympathetic concerns for the suffering of another, together with the inclination to give aid or support or to show mercy.

Therefore to feel compassion and do nothing is biblically unfounded.

APPENDIX B
SERMON TWO —GIFTS FOR THE BODY

1 Corinthians 12:13**Sermon 2****Gifts for the Body**

12:13 “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into the body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

I. Historical Setting

There had been mighty manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the church of Corinth as a result; ecstasy and enthusiasm were high. But where there is the truth, there is likely to be the spurious. It is the strategy of Satan to intercept genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit by substituting some form of religious hysteria or by convincing the individual of self-delusion. Paul devotes the present chapter to evidence of the true manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This chapter has to do with Spirit’s manifestation in regard to Spiritual gifts. The Greek soothsayer, who abounded the Corinth, observed their religious rites in a wild frenzy. The glorifying in emotional manifestation amounted to a kind of madness.

In the light of this background Corinthian Christians were inclined to look with favor upon those gifts of the Spirit that seemed the more startling to the neglect of those that appear to be eminently practical. Seeking to correct certain excuses among the Corinthians, Paul asserts that the Holy Spirit operates through the illumined mind and the quickened vision. He points out that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (14:32). “One Spirit”—the Holy Spirit, the Comforter of those coming. Jesus spoke at the time of his ascension. “Baptized,” and “and by baptism united together into one body.” The bond for Christian union is not ordinances, creeds or confusion, but the

baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is the only feasible basis for Christian union, on body of Christ. Jews or Gentile, “bond or free,” widely divergent but made one in Christ.

Doctrinal Value—God is sovereign in His distribution of the gifts of the Spirit. His sovereign will is accepted with commitment and gratitude. The practical aim for us is that we seek earnestly the best gifts, remembering that love and the spirit of prophesying take precedence over other gifts. Let us rejoice in those with unusual gifts. That we use our gifts that God has given us to the maximum for evangelism of the world. Let’s look at our first point.

Wisdom— (Greek, Sophia) sanctified intelligence. It is the wisdom, which knows God. It derives not from human ingenuity, but from insight gained through communion with God. It is received rather than obtained. Its inspiration is the closest of spiritual quickening rather than the study of intellectual enlightenment.

Knowledge— (Greek, Gnosis) Not so much technical knowledge as the knowledge that knows how to proceed in a given situation. Practical understanding involves doing the right thing at the right time. If wisdom means insight into Divine Truth, knowledge has to do with the practical application of the truth. A man thus defined sanctification. “It is not a gold ember in the hands of the Lord.” While not a product of the schools, his definition reveals penetrating insight. Accumulated knowledge, dedication, and commitment to God, as in the case of Paul, is likewise a spiritual gift. The third and final point is Faith.

Faith—Something more than ordinary faith. A faith that appropriates something of the Omnipotence of God and brings results. It makes possible the seemingly impossible. It removes mountains. It finds healing in action. “They were healed as they went.” “Who through faith subdued kingdoms?” (Heb. 11:33,34).

Paul's discussion of Spiritual gifts in this chapter closes with the exhortation to seek earnestly the best gift and the more excellent way of love, without which other gifts are no profit in the sight of God. The gift of the body is the way in which we here at Canaan will move this community to and under his Lordship.

APPENDIX C
SERMON THREE—CHURCH ORDER

Acts 6:3

Sermon 3

Church Orders**“Appoint over this business.”****I. Historical Setting**

The growth and development of the early church brought its problems of leadership and government. Some today yearn for a church without the organization and overall responsibilities of what seem to be a complicated system, yet we are shut up to the fact that even at the beginning the church could not remain simply a group of Christians meeting in houses from time to time and nothing else. Because God added believers from outside in society it was inevitable that growth brought problems and needs to be met. New life in the church and community brought an expanding program of service, physical and material situations issued in the new spiritual benefits to the whole church.

“This business.” How often pious people have discounted the business aspect of the church. This is not secular as over against the so-called spiritual. *Chreia* means “need” or “office.” There are things to be done in addition to worship, but not at the expense of worship.

Doctrinal Value—The force of the witness brought the favor of increased conversions. The growth of the church brought out the need to organize.

Simple at first, this developed throughout the New Testament; the church has continued to do so.

Practical Aim—To show that feeding the needy and caring for the neglected, such as widows and orphans in their afflictions is not secular. This is a spiritual ministry. The church is involved in the affairs of the community and world. We are truly spiritual when we are practical.

Wisdom—Wisdom is interpreted in several ways. It implies not only mental acuteness and understanding, but also a common-sense attitude toward life. Is this tact in dealing with others who differ? Is it the ability to see another point of view and have an open mind concerning matters of decisions? It suggests a business sense, being down to earth, ready to serve in practical ways and meet human needs.

Results of Good Church Order

The word of God, the truth of the gospel, was spread abroad and many accepted it. New converts, disciples, were added to the fellowship of believers. The church was multiplied and expanded its work, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Palestine. It is important to note that in Jerusalem, many of the Jewish leaders believed. In the place where Jesus was rejected and crucified, many now have turned and believe in His name. God gave inspiring results of increased membership. Wherever dedicated leadership leads the church, the church moves forward throughout the community and world.

The Church's One Foundation by Samuel J. Wesley

The Church's one foundation, Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.

APPENDIX D
PRE AND POST EVALUATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

PRE AND POST EVALUATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender _____

Age _____

Please read and answer the following questions by checking the answer in the parenthesis.

1. Do you feel that this community is showing growth
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
2. Should the church involve itself in the community growth
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
3. Would church involvement in community growth promote church growth
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
4. Do you feel that the church and the leadership should work together in order to support a growth mission
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
5. Would you take a walking tour of the community with your pastor
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
6. The community and the church should not have any involvement with each other
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
7. The church should start an outreach in the community to support growth
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
8. Church growth is urgent, now that the community is changing and growing
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
9. The community in five years will still have effect on church growth
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree
10. Should the leadership role have a part in promoting church growth in a changing community
() Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX E
PRE AND POST TEST RESULTS AND GRAPHS

Frequencies

Statistics

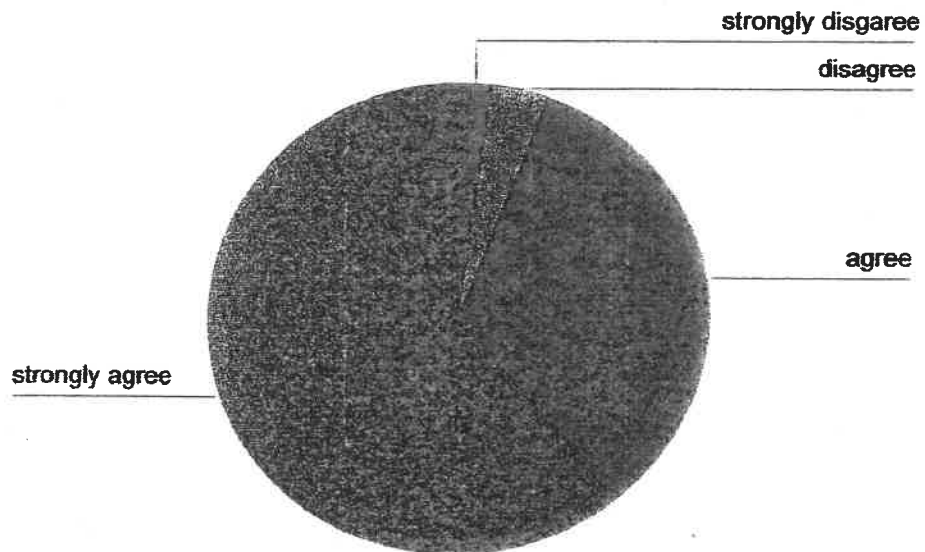
pretestsurvey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretestsurvey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
disagree	2	3.7	3.7	5.6
agree	18	33.3	33.3	38.9
strongly agree	33	61.1	61.1	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 1



Frequencies

Statistics

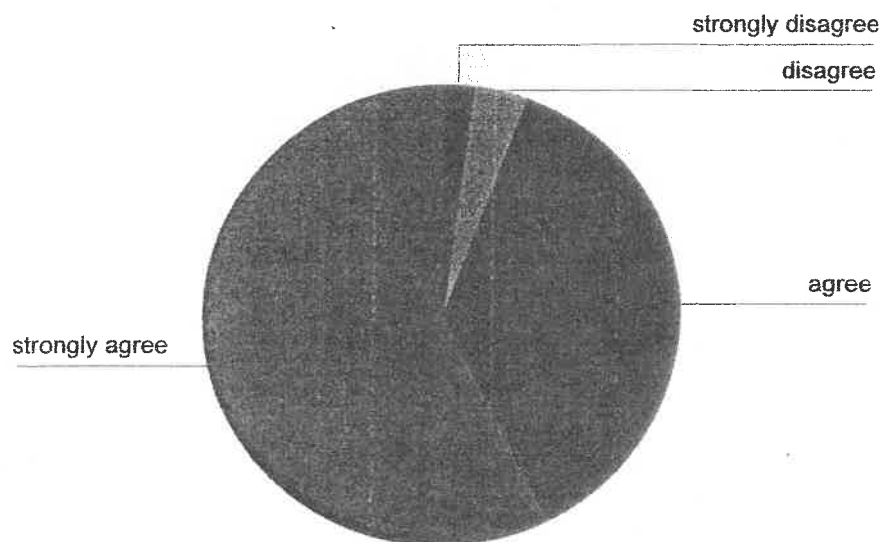
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	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
disagree	2	3.7	3.7	5.6
agree	20	37.0	37.0	42.6
strongly agree	31	57.4	57.4	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 2



Frequencies

Statistics

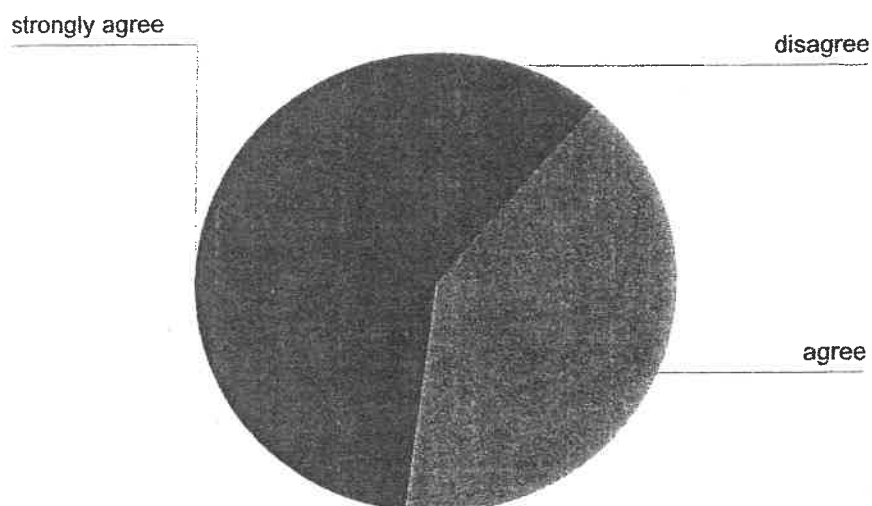
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N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	6	11.1	11.1	11.1
agree	22	40.7	40.7	51.9
strongly agree	26	48.1	48.1	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 3



Frequencies

Statistics

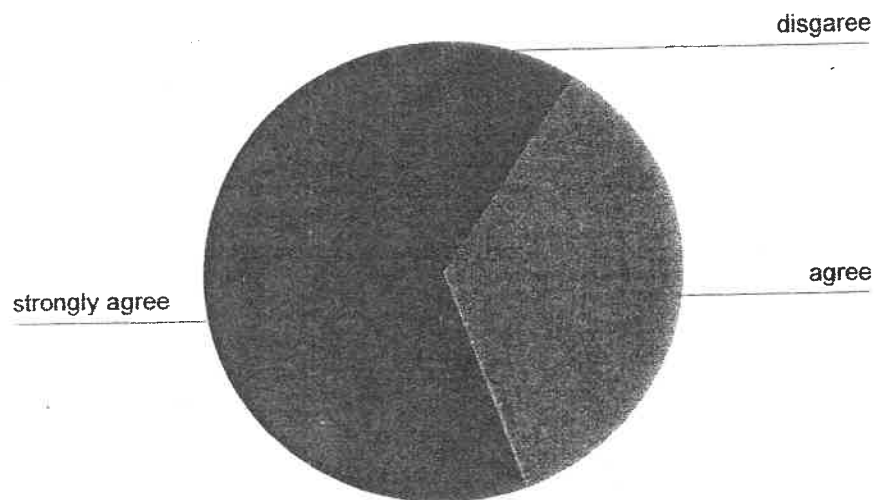
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	5	9.3	9.3	9.3
agree	19	35.2	35.2	44.4
strongly agree	30	55.6	55.6	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 4



Frequencies

Statistics

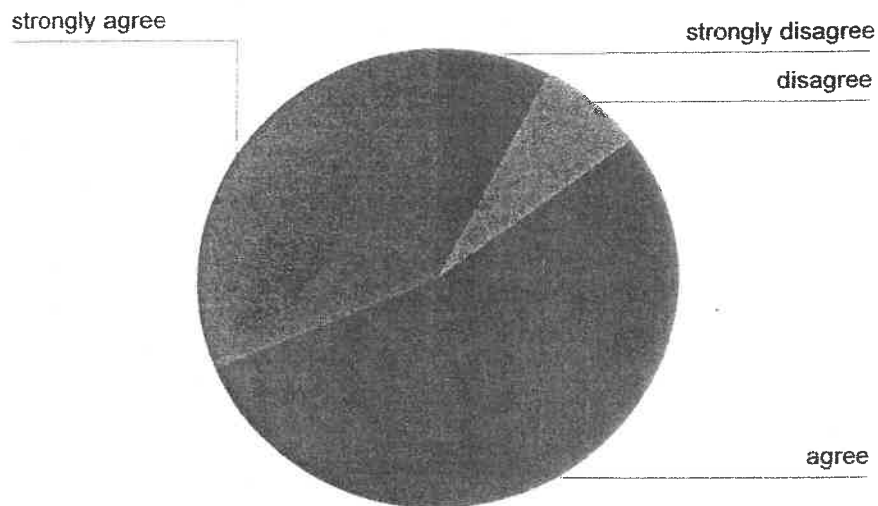
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	4	7.4	7.4	7.4
disagree	4	7.4	7.4	14.8
agree	29	53.7	53.7	68.5
strongly agree	17	31.5	31.5	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 5



Frequencies

Statistics

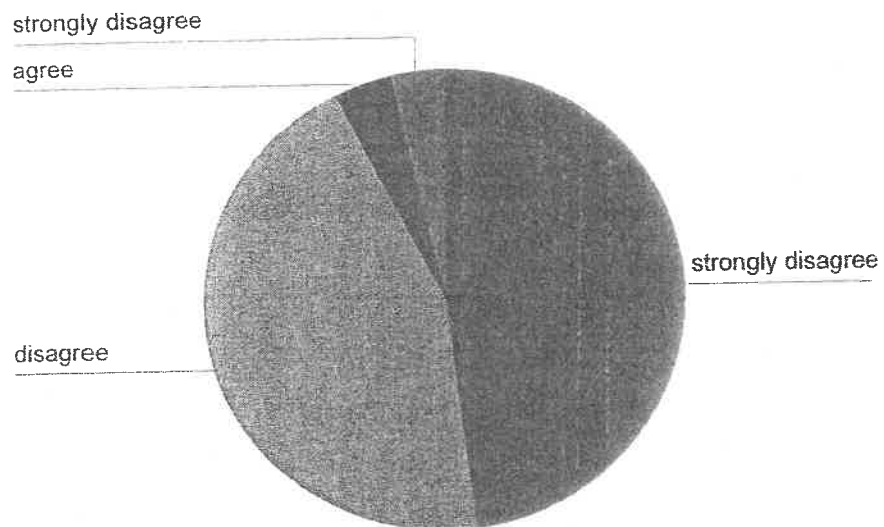
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	26	48.1	48.1	48.1
disagree	24	44.4	44.4	92.6
agree	2	3.7	3.7	96.3
strongly disagree	2	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 6



Frequencies

Statistics

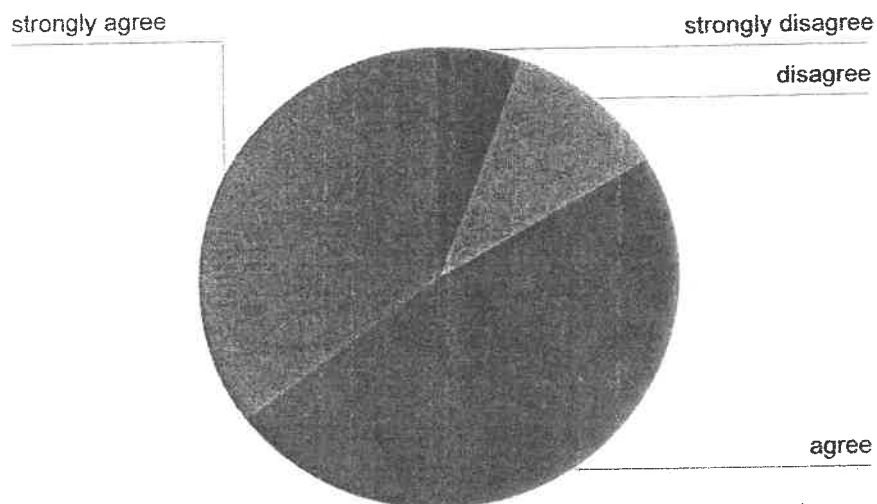
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	3	5.6	5.6	5.6
disagree	6	11.1	11.1	16.7
agree	26	48.1	48.1	64.8
strongly agree	19	35.2	35.2	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 7



Frequencies

Statistics

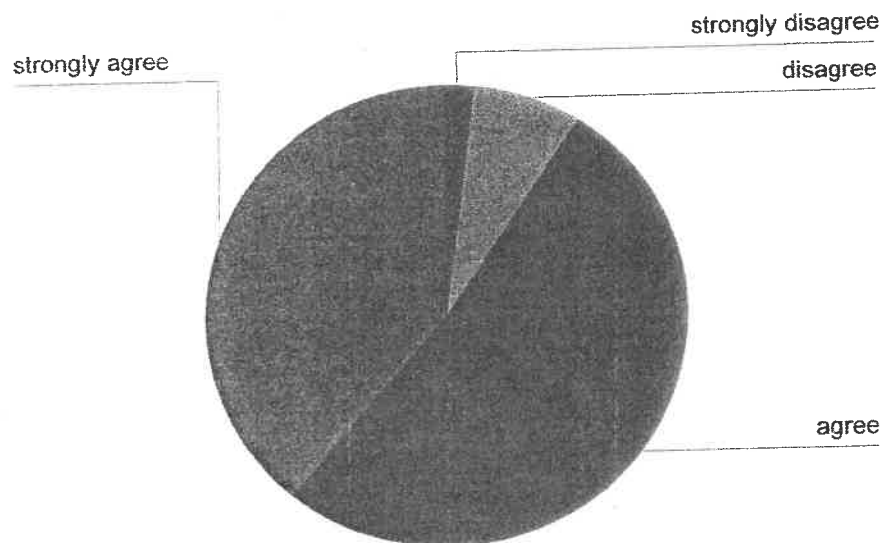
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
disagree	4	7.4	7.4	9.3
agree	28	51.9	51.9	61.1
strongly agree	21	38.9	38.9	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 8



Frequencies

Statistics

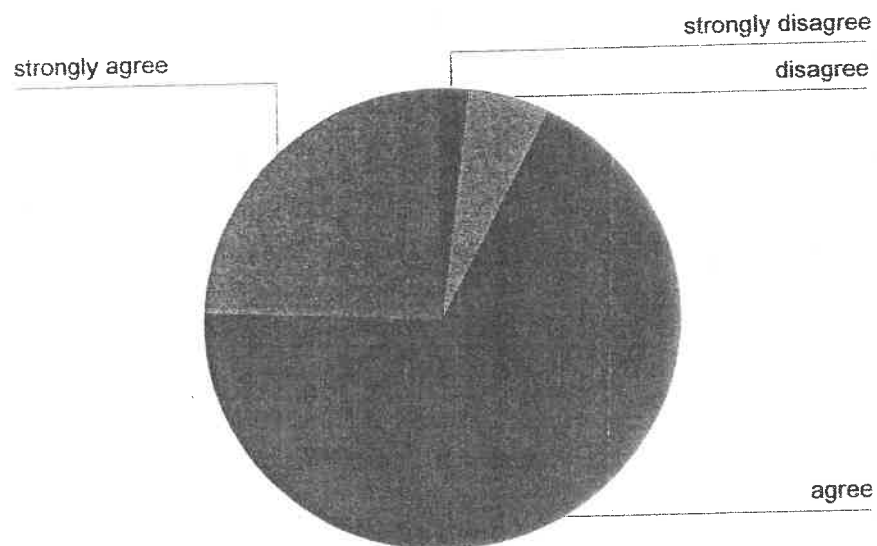
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
disagree	3	5.6	5.6	7.4
agree	37	68.5	68.5	75.9
strongly agree	13	24.1	24.1	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 9



Frequencies

Statistics

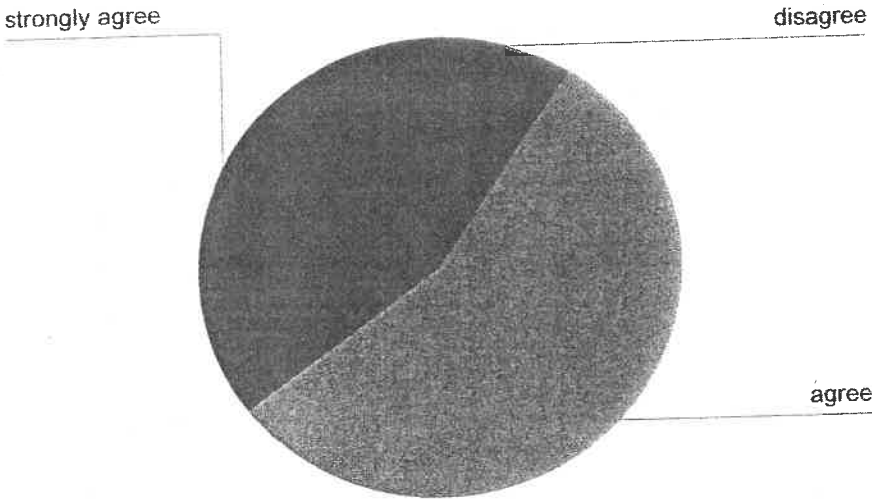
pretest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

pretest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	5	9.3	9.3	9.3
	agree	30	55.6	55.6	64.8
	strongly agree	19	35.2	35.2	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Pre Test Survey, Question 10



Frequencies

Statistics

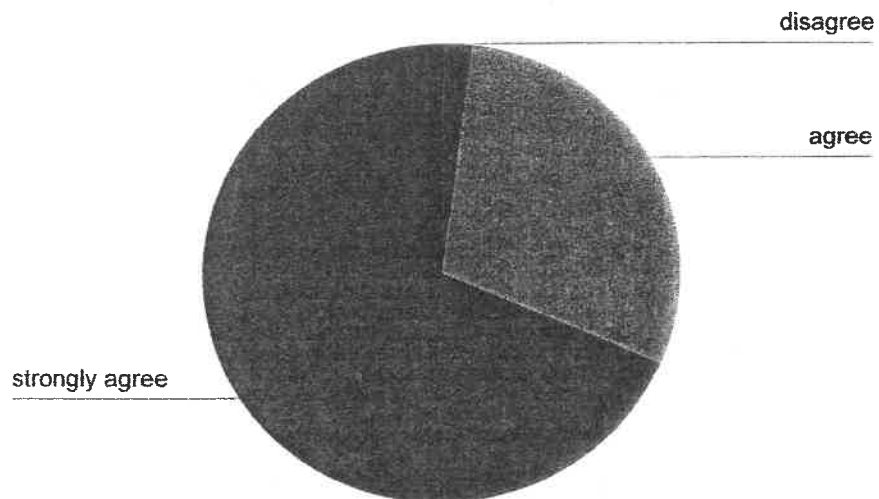
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
agree	16	29.6	29.6	31.5
strongly agree	37	68.5	68.5	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 1



Frequencies

Statistics

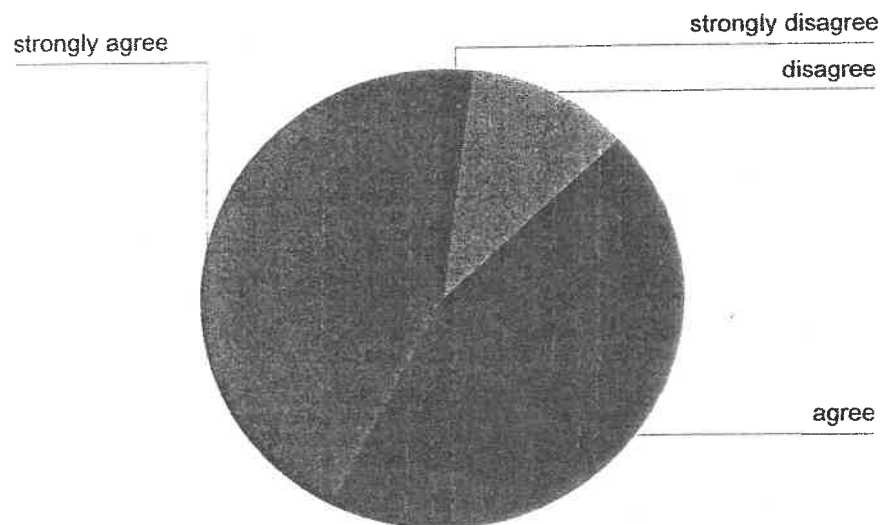
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
disagree	6	11.1	11.1	13.0
agree	24	44.4	44.4	57.4
strongly agree	23	42.6	42.6	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 2



Frequencies

Statistics

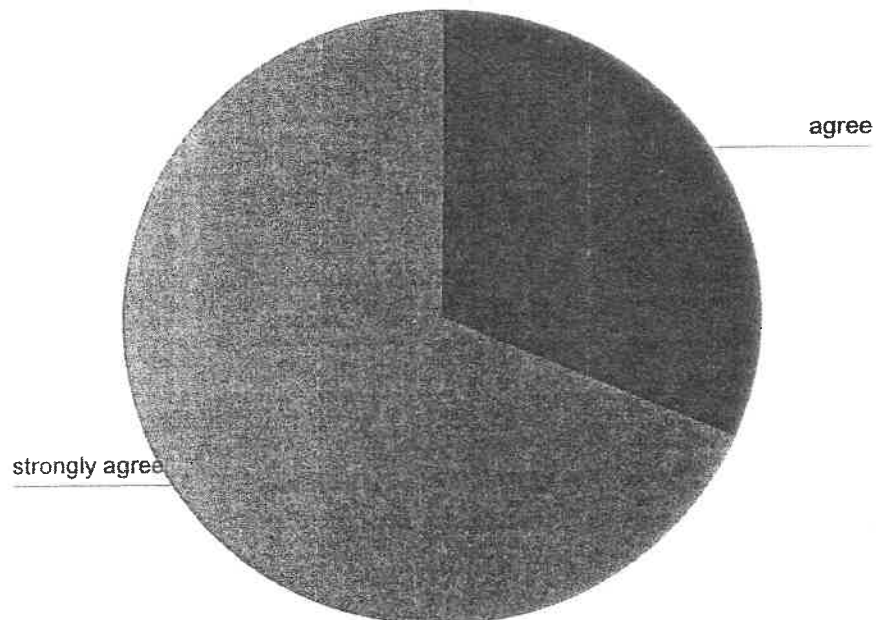
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	17	31.5	31.5	31.5
	strongly agree	37	68.5	68.5	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 3



Frequencies

Statistics

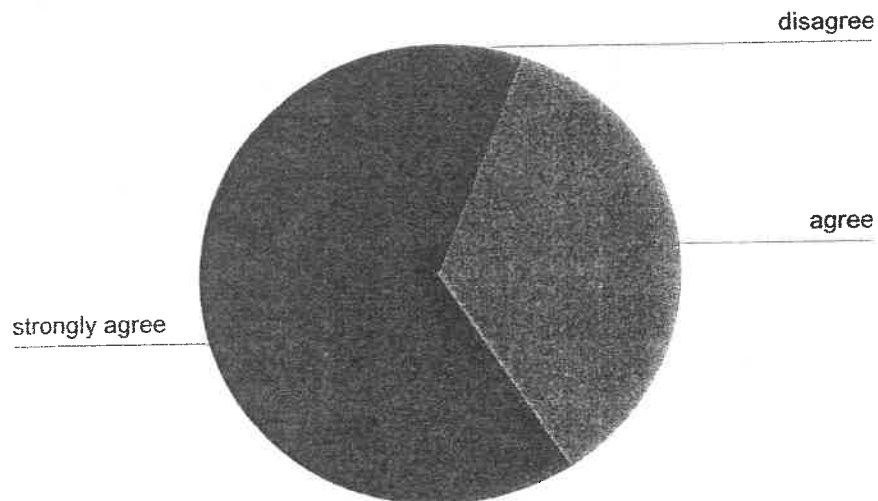
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	3	5.6	5.6	5.6
	agree	19	35.2	35.2	40.7
	strongly agree	32	59.3	59.3	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 4



Frequencies

Statistics

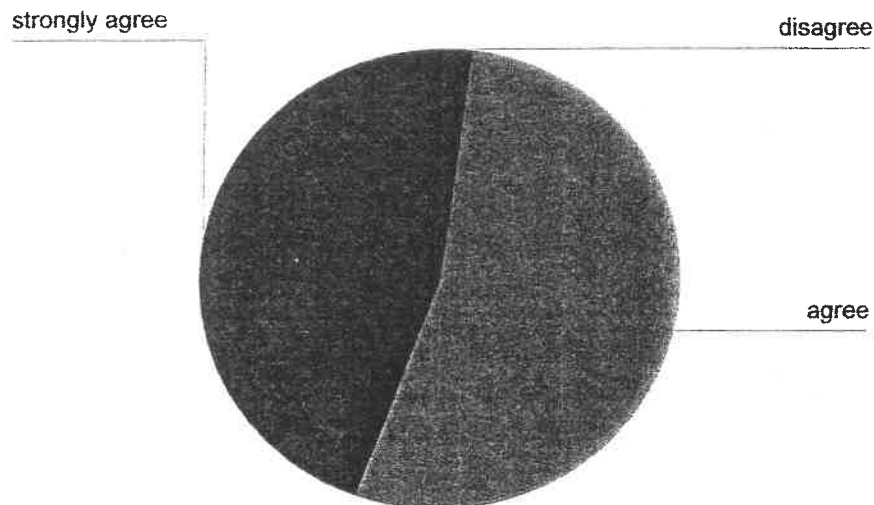
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	agree	29	53.7	53.7	55.6
	strongly agree	24	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 5



Frequencies

Statistics

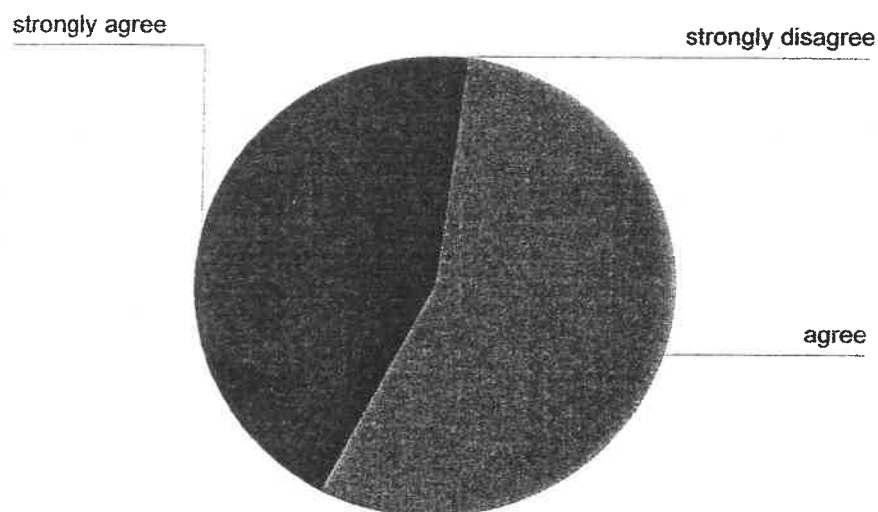
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	agree	30	55.6	55.6	57.4
	strongly agree	23	42.6	42.6	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 6



Frequencies

Statistics

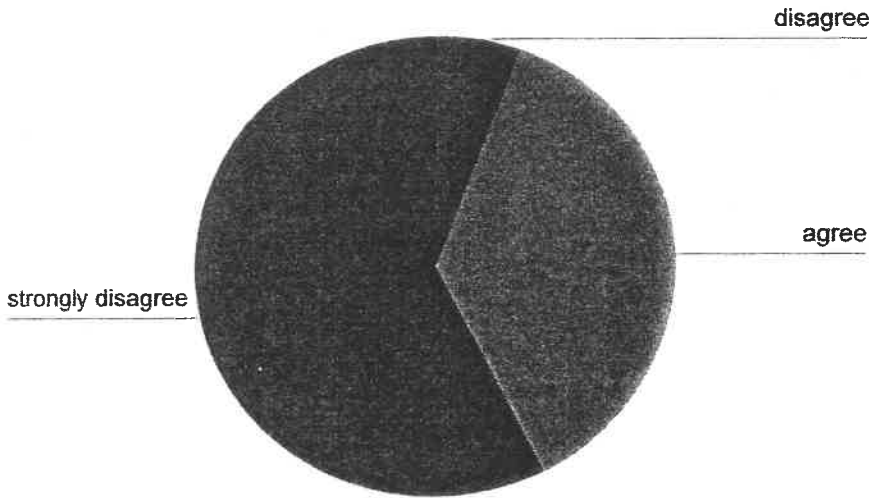
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	3	5.6	5.6	5.6
	agree	20	37.0	37.0	42.6
	strongly disagree	31	57.4	57.4	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 7



Frequencies

Statistics

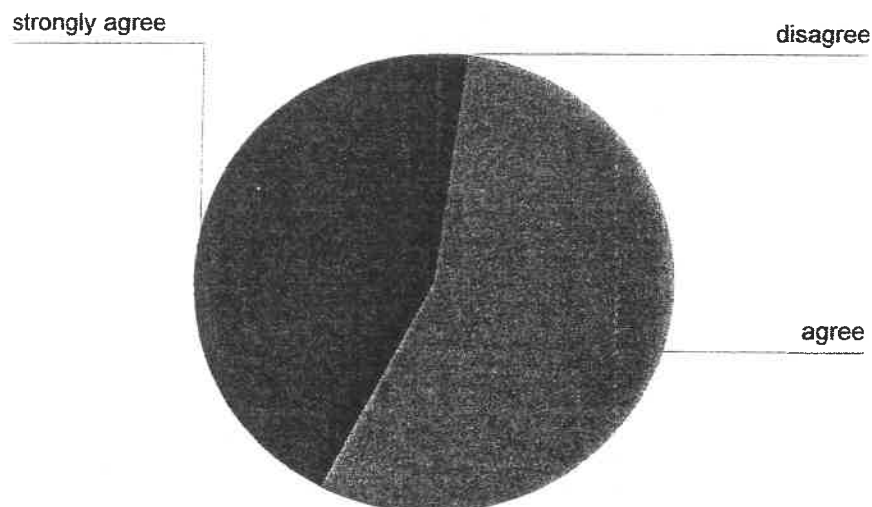
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
agree	30	55.6	55.6	57.4
strongly agree	23	42.6	42.6	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 8



Frequencies

Statistics

posttest survey

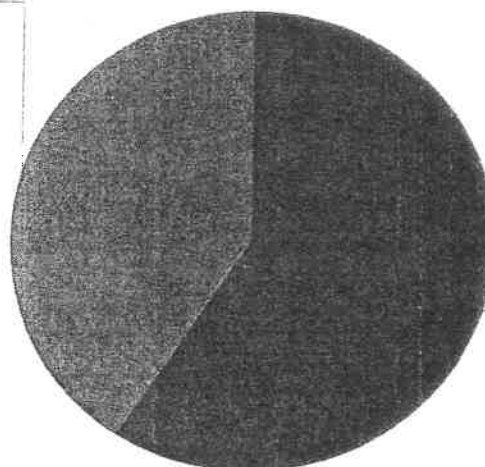
N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	32	59.3	59.3	59.3
strongly agree	22	40.7	40.7	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

Post Test Survey, Question 9

strongly agree



agree

Frequencies

Statistics

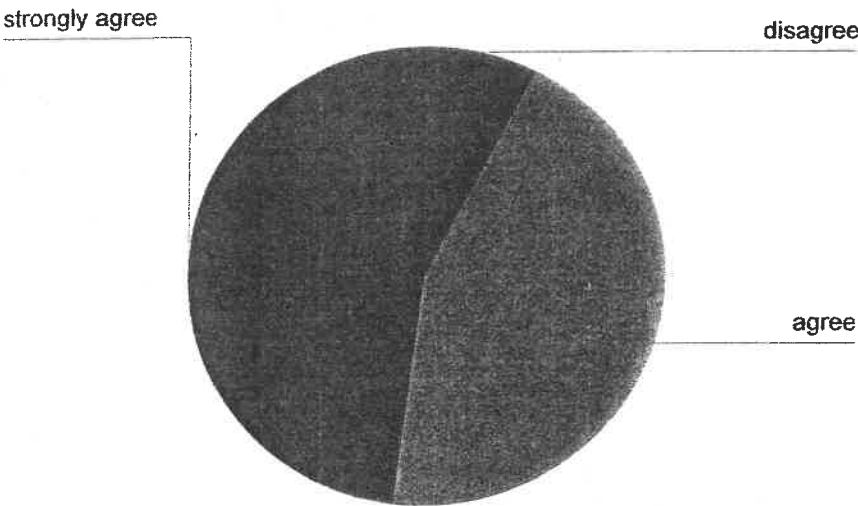
posttest survey

N	Valid	54
	Missing	0

posttest survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	4	7.4	7.4	7.4
	agree	24	44.4	44.4	51.9
	strongly agree	26	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	54	100.0	100.0	

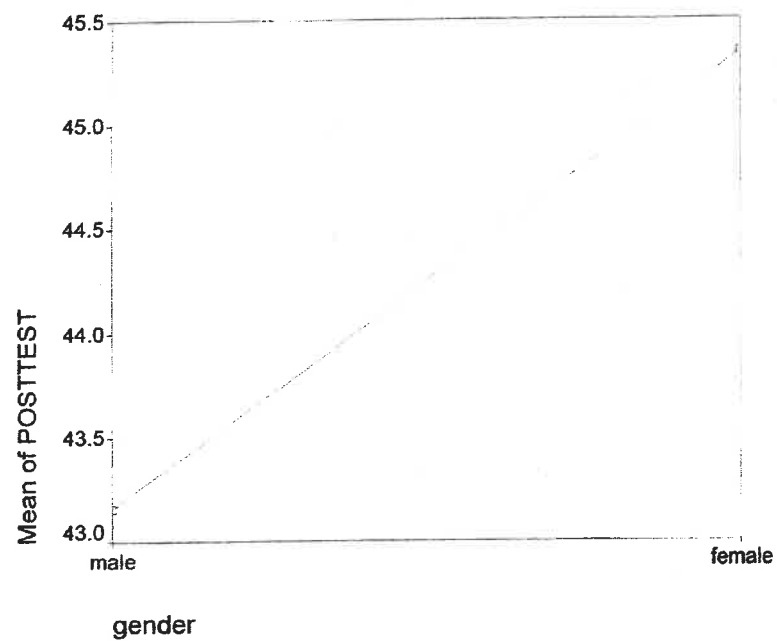
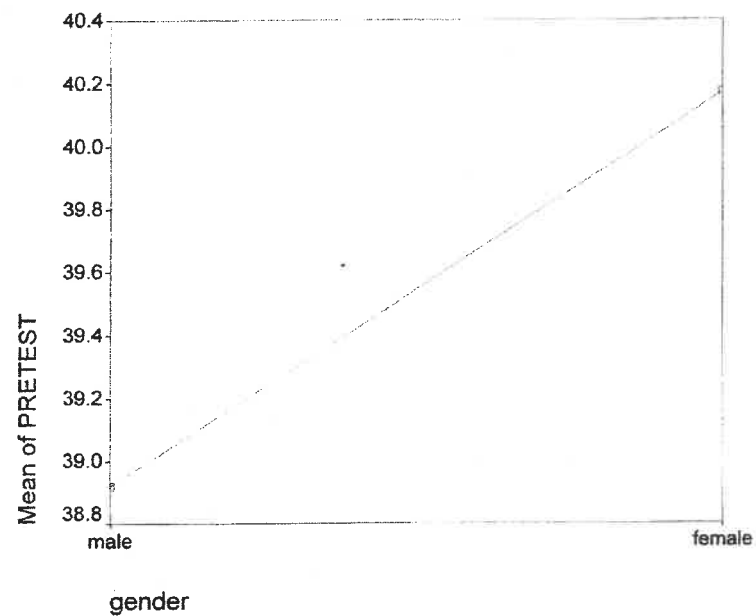
Post Test Survey, Question 10

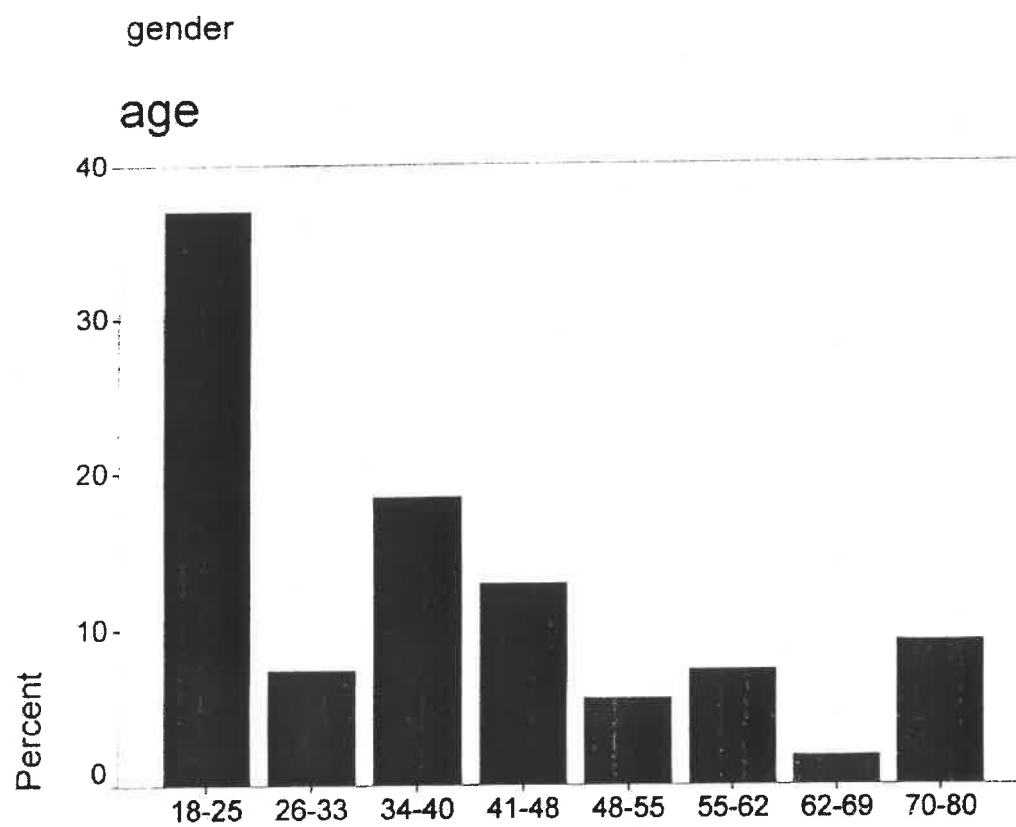
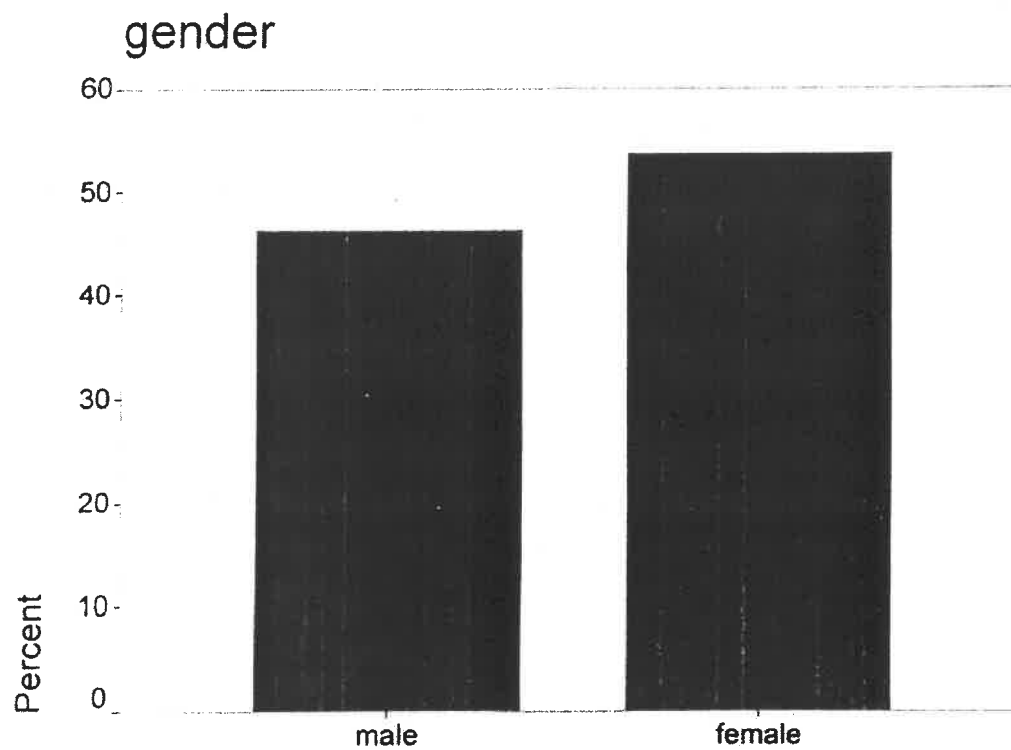


ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PRETEST	Between Groups	21.059	1	21.059	.914	.343
	Within Groups	1197.978	52	23.038		
	Total	1219.037	53			
POSTTEST	Between Groups	64.088	1	64.088	4.045	.050
	Within Groups	823.912	52	15.844		
	Total	888.000	53			

Means Plots





APPENDIX F

TWO WORKSHOPS: “LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY” AND

“OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS MEMBERS”

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP

- *a good speaker, able to command the attention of large groups*
- *older, and definitely mature*
- *clergy*
- *born a leader, not made*
- *trained to be a leader*
- *a college graduate*
- *male, not female*
- *old, not young*
- *elected to an office in the church*
- *a servant*
- *able to get things done*
- *humble*
- *very skillful*
- *very smart*
- *able to get along with everyone*
- *well known*
- *conspicuous*
- *well dressed*
- *know the bible well*
- *able to pray in public*
- *able to speak in public*

The list could go on. You can most likely add other assumptions from your own experience in your church

BIBLICAL MODEL FOR LEADERSHIP**Leadership:****On Purpose Servant Leadership (On-Purpose Leadership)—****Mark 10:45**

- (a) Jesus as the masterful purposeful leader**
- (b) Identify ways applying Jesus' leadership skills to your leadership style.**

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP:

- 1. Democratic Leadership – shared leadership, majority rule**
- 2. Dictatorial – autocratic, oppressive, possesses, absolute power**
- 3. Innovative Leadership – Introduction of new ideas, methods or device**
- 4. Creative Leadership – ability to create, not imitate, imaginative**

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

1. Thou shalt build thy relationship with God before thou presumest to be a leader.
2. Thou shalt learn to be a leader by first being a patient, loyal, helpful, serving, follower.
3. Thou shalt not seek leadership prematurely.
4. Thou shalt be willing to take defeat gracefully and be willing to help thy rival succeed.
5. Thou shalt remember that God's principle for leadership is service to others.
6. Thou shalt expect criticism and opposition and shalt use them as a means for improvement.
7. In meekness thou shalt solicit and value the advice of others.
8. Thou shalt delegate responsibility.
9. Thou shalt encourage the leadership qualities in others so that the thing begun will be carried on by capable successors.
10. Thou shalt remember that all commitments are sacred, no matter how big or small.

A New Millennium: THE SHAPE OF MINISTRY

- I. A new black parishioner we have to minister to.
 - A. In search of God's truth
 - B. Attends Bible Study and Worship regularly
 - C. Not concerned about denomination
 - D. Not conversant with the language of the Church
 - a. opening the doors
 - b. the ark of safety
 - c. liquid grave, etc.

- II. The new black parishioner is more serious in his or her approach to the church; and is concerned about:
 - A. Can this church minister to my total needs; spiritually and physically?
 - B. Is this church really serious about the teachings of the Christ?
 - C. Is this church really serious about the Great Commission of the church? (Matthew 28:19-20)

- III. The new black parishioner is concerned about the freedom in worship and the celebration of the Holy Spirit.
 - A. Healing
 - B. Speaking in tongues
 - C. Shouting
 - D. Dialoging with the pulpit

This outline is in no way conclusive; in my attempt to apprise you of the kind of worshiper we are ministering to today and on into the New Millennium.

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